"Where there is no vision the people perish"

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POETS AND PLAYWRIGHTS

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The Poetry Review

THE JOURNAL OF THE POETRY SOCIETY (INCORPORATED)

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The Fount of Poetic Inspiration

IN THE POETRY REVIEW for May, 1943, there appeared an abstract of an address, given to The Poetry Society by Dr. Douglas Webster on "Periodic Inspiration in Poetry and Music", designed to show that inspiration arises in many artists at well established time intervals in their lives and in certain numerous cases at intervals of 7-6 months. It is clear that, quite apart from this theory, circumstance has much to do with outbursts of inspiration in poetry and it is the object of this article to consider place and circumstance, rather than time, as the immediate cause of poetic inspiration.

We have Shelley's own admission that, even to a major poet, inspiration is fitful and transitory. In his "Defence of Poetry" he says "poetry is not like reasoning, a power to be exerted according to the determination of the will. A man cannot say 'I will compose poetry'. The greatest poet even cannot say it; for the mind in creation is as a fading coal, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness." Most poets would, in my experience, agree that, often after a long period of infertility, they arrive suddenly at a moment when whole poetic phrases leap into the quickened consciousness. Perhaps ideas for several poems will crowd in on them at once in this moment of "transitory brightness". What are the causes of these sudden bursts of fertility? An interesting commentary on them can, I think, be made.

In many cases a long period of fruitless search for ideas has preceded these peak moments and it is likely that, without this long toil, the peak times would not have been so productive. The long meditation has not been wasted. It has merely needed some stimulus to cause it to yield its fruits. But, granted that this is so, the nature of the stimulus remains to be explored.

We are all familiar with the theory of "art in a garret". According to this theory, deprivation is a stimulus to artistic conception. It suggests that the poet, starved of colour in a drab life, conjures a substitute colour from his own imagination and embodies it in poems rich in colour and imagery.

James Thomson (B.V.) in his poem "Art" set out this theory at some length, the following lines being typical of his theme:

> Singing is sweet; but be sure of this,
> Lips only sing when they cannot kiss . . .
> Who gives the fine report of the feast?
> He who got none and enjoyed it least.
> Were the wine really slipping down his throat
> Would his song of the wine advance a note?

The poems of Francis Thompson, so brilliant in colour and phraseology, no doubt support this theory. One can well imagine the consolation that the mystic matchseller of Charing Cross derived from the rich imagery of the phrases forming in his mind.

I think therefore that we must agree that times of deprivation are a fruitful stimulus to a certain type of mind. It is, however, equally true that moments of intense emotional satisfaction can provide a powerful stimulus, and I would submit that it is at times of monotony, when neither the heights nor the depths are encountered, that stimulus is most absent. Goethe is an example of a poet whose stimulus was found in moments of emotional superfluity, as he has explained in his own writings. It is as though, in a moment of intense emotional pleasure, there is an overflow of the feelings into poetry. The nerve centres seem at such peak times to be put into a state of acute tension, in which, like taut violin strings, they are sensitive to every passing experience. We are told that Milton and Leonardo da Vinci both liked to hear music before beginning to work, thus furnishing an example of a deliberate attempt to put the mind into a state of emotional satisfaction and tension with a view to stimulus. Such men, who write best when the cup of life is full, would probably write nothing of value in a state of deprivation.

Examples of still more deliberate attempts to heighten the state of emotional tension could, of course, be given. Apart from the use of various drugs, Lombroso, in his interesting book, *The Man of Genius*, gives various examples of instinctive methods of augmenting the cerebral circulation. Thus, Shelley would lay on the hearthrug with his head close to the fire. Rousseau would meditate with his head in the full glare of the sun, whilst Milton would compose with his head leaning over his easy chair.

Such methods, however, can do nothing but enable the mind to draw inspiration from its own resources, and most poets will probably find their stimulus in some contact with people and affairs. As J. B. Meyer has said: "Creative fancy requires supplies from life, and can not draw its wondrous threads from out of its own body as a silkworm does."

Even when in contact with people and affairs, the times of inspiration are merely occasional. For some long time the poet may move in such a sphere, whilst taking full part in its life. Suddenly the life about him is caught and held in a web of inspiration. The moment at which this occurs is no doubt partly determined by the other factors referred to in this article and possibly also by the factor of periodicity dealt with in Dr. Webster's lecture.

The influence of sex as a poetic stimulus is, of course, important. Instances of sexual love as stimulus are so frequent and obvious that no examples need here be given. So powerful is this stimulus that it may well be said that just as, in a physical sense, the man has the power to fertilise the woman, so, in an artistic and poetic sense, the woman has the power of fertilising the male artistic genius.

Locality has its place in providing inspiration, and probably all poets have their own particular resorts for obtaining the emotional food upon which their inspiration thrives. I know a poet for whom a walk through Kensington seldom fails to provide a stimulus!

It is a curious fact that, to most poets, contact with the full flow of life appears to have a more inspirational effect in warm, if not sunny, conditions of weather. Here also Lombroso gives many examples. Milton could write successfully only from the Spring equinox to that of Autumn. Rousseau found that the action of the sun aided him to compose and Voltaire had his study warmed throughout the year. Schiller, in his correspondence with Goethe, shows very clearly his incapacity to do good work in dull weather. It seems certain that many poets are only truly alive when the sun is blazing. How much of this is a physical

effect and how much merely psychological it is difficult to say, for such a temperament is always wide open to every emotional sun that gleams.

Finally we may note the somewhat strange fact that, at times of mental exhaustion, the imagination may be greatly stimulated. The explanation is probably that, at such times, the exhausted intellectual powers are too feeble to keep a check on the emotional processes. Schiller has said that "in a creative brain reason has withdrawn her watch at the doors, and ideas crowd in pell-mell". In a state of mental exhaustion reason has perforce to withdraw her watch and the fancy is thereby set free.

WILLIAM WOLFF.

Jasmine

WHENCE do you come, Golden Flower? With what intent?
Inward dream
of nature, by whom were you sent?
Are you charged with mission to redeem
the hard winter of a prodigal's lament,
unveiling beauty from celestial springs
reserved in hearts that mirror holy things?

The seeds of eternity that time will grow
lie buried in your womb;
ah, thornless crown on Shiloh's brow,
your roots have rent the tomb;
your falling petals follow Death—
far down the corridors of night—
and set a wreath,
a garland, round his head, and thus bedight
he wears a grandeur not his own,
that we may meet him, unafraid, alone.

And beyond, what do we find?
Oh surely, all unknowing, we were blind;
how little could we hear
with a fleshy, lifeless ear,
and how merciful that man is dumb
whose heart has lost the pulse, the cosmic thrum.

Alas, we hold a silver cord,
to bind us captive in these broad
and pleasant lands,
for no one understands
that earth and heaven are one, one above and one below,
one everywhere the soul can go.

R.N.H.Q., Melbourne. *Greswolde Davis.*

Impressionist

SHE sat in the Milk Bar: with the gigolo man—
A witty fool and a dashing blood;
And she was sophisticated—I acknowledge it—
She was sophisticated beyond a doubt—
Knew all the come-backs, played with his light remark;
She was no fly for the parlour of the sleek tarantula
—Unless she could spin the web.
—Except she should desire to go, and accept the code
Of the glamorous game—O, think it not, my heart—
Never, my mind, consider!—with that hair,
Black as the night outside, and the deep blue eyes
And the flowing grace—Say it not, O my soul!
For she was meant for me.
And all the time—ever she looked at me,
Smiled deep down in the eyes and loved with lips
And made my thoughts see the moon in its mighty urge
Looming alone for the poet—and she all the poet's dream!

She is the immaculate conception of my wild ideal,
I am in great despair at the thought of her loveliness,
At her thick dark flowing hair and her crimson lips,
Her strong but delicate voice and her lustrous eyes,
At the form I cannot describe.
Many have I seen in the grip of the gorgon jaws,
Many a butterfly caught in the snare of the Orchis
—But never yet one that is fascinated, and unfouled;
And what if I were the poet that I wish to be—
What if I were the soul of all Russia's gloom—
Or of Ireland's sorrow?—yet would I be inept
To image this masterpiece, and my misery:
For this I would be a painter, but only for this,
Or else a musician to fashion a Symphony
Or an Arabesque—knowing the mystery
That would elude me still.
Ah, but I created about her my lavishing dream,
I tenderly approached her and gave her the gift of my love,
Delicately robed her in all the infinite bliss
Of my imagery—my helplessly great imagination;
Ah, could I show her the ecstasy that I feel
—Vague with the frightening of my fusing woe!
But I remember . . . remember . . . remember . . .
That I have relished this rare, this ravishing rose,
And I have dreamed her deep down in my soul's unrest—
But what am I thinking, who knoweth the way of dreams?

Thomas Astore.

Quo Vadis?

THIS is the sheep's road
Between down and down,
Winding out of the wind,
Circling the summit,
Where,
It will never reach.
The slow, patient beasts
Intent upon food and sleep
And the business of life,
Made it without knowledge
Of where they were going
Or why,
(Cropping the short down-grass,
Contented.)
Sheep are good beasts,
Virtuous
And of great humility.
They are patient in affliction,
They do not argue or command,
Or condemn,
They go the same way;
And it were well for us
To take the sheep's road,
Avoiding the dangers of the summit—
The wind, like a keen-edged knife,
The landslip with no warning
The precipice at our feet.
But we have denied
The pastoral virtues,
The easy road,
The warm fold at night;
And a man is no longer safe
If he love his wife,
Live at peace with his neighbours
And do good to his kind.
We have denied
The sheep's road
Between down and down,
Winding out of the wind;
And we have chosen instead
The lonely heights of winter,
Cold and severe.
And the pitiless, staring stars.

L. E. Brodie.

On the Shooting of a Golden Oriole

"FOR three years in succession a pair of golden orioles came and nested in a small wood about a hundred yards beyond the barbed wire of our (German) prisoner-of-war camp. How we looked forward to their coming! But in the third year one of the guard went out and shot the male bird, and its mate, after haunting the place for a day or two, flew away."

O! cast your green, your first, faint green of Spring,
You elms, you birches, and you poplar trees.
Assume the sallow leaves wherein disease,
Borne on the mists and dews and droning wing
Of Autumn many-hued and withering,
Clothes branch and bough upon the year's decease.
Forget the Prime, the Summer's warmth and ease,
And to your death-raped sanctuary bring
A sombre drapery of wind and rain
And foliage sparse and sere. Choose this sad hour
To be the Fall: in its tumultuous dole
Intone a twofold prophecy and pain,
The doom of man in prostituted power,
And mankind's requiem for the oriole.

Thomas Demarden Williams.

Homesickness for France

THAT morning, in the clear light
and the sun's languor, when the sirens had wailed
I heard a voice in the street below speaking the Tongue.
Death snarled in the sky, ranging high and fast,
but death was nothing, and the Tongue was all:
street, sunlight, morning—gone: gone the years too—
O all the arras of the years torn down!—
and I was there again: the raddled streets
of the old city, sorded and lyric in dawn:
reek of wine lees, staccato-chattered French—
rue Tous Vents and the sombre leaning houses
shuttered, with light like a witch's eye
in some high window leering,
and youth, youth—the pristine, the ever-new,
having immortality, playing with desperate loves—
Riette, Celeste, Simone—
the deathless names, the magical, that lost their magic, died
as youth died.
There is a deeper death
than any ranging these intolerable skies.

Michael Delarche.

Poets at War

THEY wrote of Life, in lost remembered days
Before the red god spread his lurid flame;
They wrote of Beauty, ere destruction came
Its cruel bars against her face to raise;
They heard the siren sound of Nature's call,
And unresisting answered it, to tell
The secrets they might learn beneath her spell;
They wrote of Love—of Love the most of all!

But they have lived with Ugliness, and Death,
And human Hate, the world's old festered sore;
They learned of things that Nature heretofore
Withheld from them beneath her honeyed breath . . .
What new, untempered note, born thus in pain,
Will drive them when they turn to write again?

Papatoetoe, Auckland, N.Z. *Ivy F. Smytheman.*

To Doreen

DREAM, my dear darling,
Deep in your beautiful bed
Of quiet content. Dream;
And I will gaze on your golden head
And dread the moment when hungry desire again
Will wake and wrestle with your wholeness.
Ah do not wake, my girl goddess;
Do not break your quiet cloak of rest.

This way, lying still in sleep,
The mapped and quiet country,
Your body breathes with the sun
And is grateful as the brown
And ancient clay and the green-grass gown
Where your rich hair and your head lie down.

The moment "now" looks over its shoulder
And takes eternity in with its eyes;
The whole world of time now lies
Stretched and sleeping. You are older

Now than the ancient hills your brothers;
On your softly parted lips
The wisdom, the lovely grief sleeps
That sweet solace is for lovers.

You are all the love of years,
Of ancient women, of the firm

Soil and its black prince the Sun . . .
(Oh, what wonderful garments my love wears;

She is all clothed in sleep and age, and lies
In the grass like Psyche in her golden
Night; but open her eyes to behold him,
Her lover, he swiftly from her flies.)

Ah! do not wake, my girl goddess;
Do not throw away your dress
Of immortality. Just one kiss
Of my burning lips would destroy your life,
And now you are to the world a wife. *John Preston*

Requiem

DEEP, deep beneath the kind, concealing earth
Bury his body, and with it everything
That clogged his spirit from the hour of birth:
Each trivial tyranny, each pitiful lust,
Now let corruption change them into dust—
Grudge the worm nothing, let it have its fling.
Yet from this grave with the returning spring
Some bold green blade may break the prisoning sod,
A symbol of his once high destiny;
Nay, more, a sign of what he still may be—
If there be any virtue, any praise,
That you recall about him in old days,
Be very sure that it is known to God. *Enid M. Norman*

Briar

WE flung dead roses on our summer fire
And watched the sudden, resurrected bloom
Of golden flowers in a shadowed room;
The fitful loveliness of burning briar.
I laughed and told you that they were not dead:
Such sparkling things they were, such sparkling things
Of shining stems and leaves like golden wings—
As luminous as love! You turned your head.
And for one quiet moment you were God
And all the years were gathered in your eyes;
You were the Infinite, the One who trod
Among the stars in seasonless wide skies—
And I was in the shadows, heavy-shod,
Bound fast to earth, unlovely and unwise. *Nancy Bowden.*

The Cut Reed

NO dust sirocco from the desert flew
To sear with drought the moorland mere,
But the wind-lyric of the west land blew
Season by season, year on year.
Mist muted airs ripple the placid deep
Of waters in the osiery
Or pregnant with black fury tempests leap
Shrieking upon the sedge, to be
A rapier to the reed that bends but will
Not break. Then summer-soft it flows
Around the verge while flower-de-luce all spill
Their golden ensigns where it goes.

One reed, the choice, to take the buffeting,
The sorrow of the piercing blade,
The joy that teaches sorrow how to sing
On hollow pipes the soul has made.
One liquid note be mine to end the song!
My prayer for the deathless favour—
That I may time a lilting breve along
With the west wind's perfect quaver.
Had I the gift of words to do my part,
And tune cool water-poems sung
Before the scorching mistral of the heart
Will parch the lips and dry the tongue.

Corsen Dreghys. *Gladys Hunkin*
(Bard of the Cornish Gorsedd).

Oh, Then I Could Know . . .

IF I could cull from our English speech
harmonious words to chant or sing,
and place them carefully each by each
with beauty and truth in the garnering;

if they brought the heart to the hearer's throat,
and lifted the soul to a higher plane,
discarding the futile as things remote,
and rousing the latent god-like strain;

if whenever was heard the opening phrase
contentment flooded the world-hurt soul
that consciously waited, in quiet amaze,
for remembered joy and completed whole;

oh, then I could know I had justified
the long life line from the dim dark past—
for a space I had been of that Spirit, whose pride
was a being created—a song that would last.

Vancouver, B.C. *Irene H. Moody.*

To You, My Friend

To you, my friend,
I gave a wisp of heather
And with it all I had of love to spare,
That it might lend,
When we are not together,
Its sweetness to the memories we share.

To you that day
I said (for man is feckless)
"When it means nothing send it back to me",
And turned away;
But you, forever reckless,
Swore, as you called me back, that could not be.

My friend, of you
Now far away in distance
I think, as Autumn flames upon the wall,
And where they grew,
Silent, without resistance,
I see the petals of the red rose fall.

And ah, my dear, my dear, I wonder whether
'Tis I or you will hold at last the heather! *Phyllis Lyth.*

High Summer

THIS then is love, this stillness in my heart
That gathers to itself these lovely skies.
All summer's in the wild rose and the elm,
For measureless content within me lies.

New realms belong to me, no longer now
Shall the sun burn me with consuming fire,
For underneath the golden height of noon,
I find one tree whose shadow's my desire.

The heat of love in shimmering mists engulfs
The hesitation of the spring's pale beams,
And from its scarlet tide I bend and pluck
The timeless rose of summer's secret dreams.

When winter, with its grip of fear and cold,
Lays bare the gilded fields with silver rime,
Still shall I sit beneath your tree of love
And keep your heart, the rose of summertime.

Marguerite Tudor Williams.

Wilfred Owen

CECIL DAY LEWIS has remarked that the three men who have most influenced the trend of modern poetry are Gerard Manley Hopkins, T. S. Eliot and Wilfred Owen. Of these three Owen is probably the least well known, for he was killed before he was able to perfect his technique. Owen's life was spent in an age which—through the imperative claims of war—was even less kind in providing leisure for writing than were the sordid and artificial 1920s and 1930s, during which Eliot's work flowered to perfection. Hopkins, who might be called the first of the "moderns", lived in a period far removed—not by actual years but by man's whole conception of the position of peace and war and their relevant machinations—from that of the present day, or even of 1914-18.

It is true, of course, that though war may provide little leisure or facility for writing poetry, yet the war-periods in our history have produced some of the most significant work: an impetus is produced and pent-up emotions find their way on to paper—and thence into the portfolios of posterity. The young poets of the first world war have carved a peculiar niche for themselves in literary history; some of their names may be less well known than others; but among them are Rupert Brooke, Siegfried Sassoon, C. H. Sorley, Julian Grenfell, Isaac Rosenberg, and they are led by the genius of a rather shy tutor: Wilfred Owen.

Owen was an individualist; he sought to form his own particular style and technique and the work which he has left us barely extends further than the experimental stage. Throughout his life he maintained a profound admiration for the work of Keats and ultimately, following in the footsteps of the object of his homage, he likewise exemplified the veracity of the old saying, "Whom the Gods love (i.e., those to whom some peculiar gift of genius has been imparted) die young".

On 18th March, 1893, Wilfred Owen was born at Plas Wilmot, Oswestry, and he received part of his education at the Birkenhead Institute in Liverpool. While still a boy the thirst for knowledge and the love of poetry which were to be his throughout life assailed him. Writing of a holiday which he spent at Broxton by the Hill when about ten years old, he says:

> "For I fared back into my life's arrears,
> Even the weeks at Broxton, by the Hill,
> Where first I felt my boyhood fill
> With uncontainable movements; there was born
> My poethood."

When he matriculated at London University in 1910 he was already studying the works of the poets and was himself producing verses—many of them very much influenced by his idol—Keats.

In 1913, having travelled to France for health reasons, Owen obtained a tutorial post at Bordeaux. There he was encouraged in his versification by the French poet, Laurent Tailhade. In the same year Owen determined to publish a collection of verse under the title of *Minor Poems—in Minor Keys—By a Minor*. Many of these poems were immature and others were closely modelled on the work of Keats. Such, for example, was "The little Mermaid of Hans Christian Andersen, done into English verse", whose seventy-eight stanzas closely followed the style of "Isabella". These early poems, however, show us how keenly alive were Owen's senses to the beautiful and the ugly things of life:—

> "The Witch's den! Around was filthy quag,
> In whose soft mire slow-wallowed water-slugs,

Large, fat and white. There sat the fishy hag,
Beneath her hut of bones . . ."

In May, 1914, aware of his own artistic leanings, he dismissed two of the arts—music and painting—and determined to give his future to the composition of poetry. Two months later, before the advent of war changed the whole thread of his life and, with his life, his poetry, he wrote the simple and beautiful lines:—

"Leaves
Murmuring by myriads in the shimmering trees.
Lives
Wakening with wonder in the Pyrenees.
Birds
Cheerily chirping in the early day.
Bards
Singing of summer scything thro' the hay."

Owen was able to return to England in 1915 and joined the Artists' Rifles. Throughout that year he clung to the hope of soon being able to pursue his study and writing without the interference of an European inferno. He wrote: "*To be able* to write as *I know how to*, to study is necessary: a period of study, then of intercourse with kindred spirits, then of isolation. My heart is ready, but my brain unprepared, and my hand untrained. I quite envisage possibility of non-success".

In January, 1917, Owen was fighting on the Somme with the Second Battalion of the Manchester Regiment. He writes home with that peculiarly English mixture of amused irony and under-statement: "This morning I was hit! We were bombing, and a fragment from somewhere hit my thumb-knuckle. I coaxed out one drop of blood. Alas! no more! ! There is a fine heroic feeling about being in France, as I am in perfect spirits. A tinge of excitement is about me, but excitement is always necessary to my happiness". But the "perfect spirits" of the poet did not long survive the harsh brutality of warfare.

Some of his letters from the front show that the poet was a master of prose as well as of verse: ". . . They want to call No Man's Land 'England' because we keep supremacy there. It is like the eternal place of gnashing of teeth; the Slough of Despond could be contained in one of its crater-holes, the fires of Sodom and Gomorrah could not light a candle to it—to find the way to Babylon the Fallen. It is pock-marked like a body of foulest disease, and its odour is the breath of cancer . . . No Man's Land under snow is like the face of the moon, chaotic, crater-ridden, uninhabitable, awful, the abode of madness . . . "

The extreme sensitiveness to beauty and ugliness which Owen showed in his early poems made life intolerable for him at the front: "I suppose I can endure cold and fatigue and the face-to-face death as well as another; but extra for me there is the universal pervasion of *Ugliness*. Hideous landscapes, vile noises, foul language—or the distortion of the dead, whose unburiable bodies sit outside the dugouts all day, all night, the most execrable sights on earth. In poetry we call them the most glorious. But to sit with them all day, all night—and a week later to come back and find them still sitting there in motionless groups, that is what saps the 'soldierly spirit' ".

In May, 1917, Owen was diagnosed as suffering from neurasthenia; in June he developed "trench fever" and was sent back to England. Very soon he was to make the acquaintance of his contemporary, Siegfried Sassoon—and already, though with less fierceness, he had developed a similar urgent hatred of war and

fierce desire to end the futile and awful bloodshed. "Already I have comprehended a light", he wrote, "which never will filter into the dogma of any national church: namely that one of Christ's essential commands was: Passivity at any price! Suffer dishonour and disgrace, but never resort to arms. Be bullied, be outraged, be killed; but do not kill. It may be a chimerical and an ignominious principle, but there it is . . . Christ is literally in 'no man's land'. There men often hear his voice: Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for a friend. Is it spoken in English only and French? I do not believe so. There you see how pure Christianity will not fit in with pure patriotism." At the end of June he was sent to Craiglockhart War Hospital near Edinburgh, and in August Sassoon also arrived.

Craiglockhart produced a magazine called *The Hydra*, which saw the first publication of some of Owen's work as well as some of Sassoon's. The first and very small issue, which may have been edited by Owen himself, was not very successful. It was then entirely remodelled by a young Scotsman, James Bell Salmond, since well known as poet, novelist and editor of the *Scots Magazine*. In the issues produced by Salmond in the autumn of 1917 some of both Owen's and Sassoon's work appeared.

Owen submitted some of his work to the judgment of the older poet—at first nervously and modestly. Very soon a very real friendship sprang up between them. Edmund Blunden has written: "The chance that gave Owen the friendship of Mr. Sassoon, then endeavouring in all ways open to him, but above all by poetical challenge, to shed light on the futile ugliness of the war, was a good one. It supplied the answer to the petition for a poet's companionship which Owen uttered in his verses years before . . . the impact of Mr. Sassoon's character, thought and independent poetic method gave the other a new purpose". Robert Graves, a great friend of Sassoon's, has written of his friend's advent at Craiglockhart in his autobiography, *Good-bye to all That*: "Another patient at the hospital was Wilfred Owen, who had had a bad time with the Manchester Regiment in France; and, further, it had preyed on his mind that he had been accused of cowardice by his commanding officer. He was in a very shocking condition. It was meeting Siegfried here that set him writing his war-poems. He was a quiet, round-faced little man". But Sassoon himself, who has written a most interesting account of his first meeting with Owen in *Siegfried's Journey 1916-20*, disallowing the statement that Owen modelled his war poetry on his own, says: "My own claimable influence was that I stimulated him towards writing with compassionate and challenging realism. His printed letters are evidence that the impulse was already strong in him before he had met me. The manuscript of one of his most dynamically descriptive war poems, "Exposure", is dated February, 1917, and proves that he had already found an authentic utterance of his own". Actually the MS. of "Exposure", says Edmund Blunden, was dated February, 1916, but he considered it to be a slip.

When Owen first met him Sassoon had already begun to make a name for himself, and in introducing himself to the older man Owen was shy and modest. As time went on they became better acquainted and discussed poetic form while the younger poet brought his poems for the other's criticism but "it was, however, not until some time in October", writes Sassoon (and they had first met in August), "when he brought me his splendidly constructed sonnet "Anthem for Doomed Youth", that it dawned on me that my little friend was much more than the promising minor poet I had hitherto adjudged him to be. I now realised that

his verse, with its sumptuous epithets and large-scale imagery, its noble naturalness and depth of meaning, had impressive affinities with Keats, whom he took as his supreme exemplar".

That Owen's interests at Craiglockhart were not only literary is instanced by the fact that he was an active member of the "Field Club". In a copy of the *Hydra* for November, 1917 (the issue which includes Siegfried Sassoon's "Thrushes" and which was edited not by Owen, as both Sassoon and Blunden imply, but by J. B. Salmond), we read that he read a paper to that club on soil composition, classification and fertility! During the time he was in Edinburgh Owen also lectured at Tynecastle School and was engaged on some historical research in the Advocates' Library; in short, he found his stay there so pleasant that when his departure was imminent he wrote: "I am seriously beginning to have aching sensations at being rooted up from this pleasant Region". He left Craiglockhart at the beginning of November, 1917, and his first letter to Sassoon, written after their separation, bears witness to the immense respect in which he held the recipient: "Know that since mid-September when you still regarded me as a tiresome little knocker on your door, I held you as Keats + Christ + Elijah + My Colonel + my father-confessor + Amenophis IV in profile . . . you have *fixed* my Life—however short".

Before they parted Sassoon had given his friend a letter of introduction to Robert Ross, who soon brought Owen into London literary circles. Under Ross's guidance he met Arnold Bennett, and H. G. Wells—the latter he described thus: "Presently I became aware of a pair of bayonet-coloured eyes, threatening at me from over, as it were, a brown sandbag".

Sent to Scarborough, Owen became major-domo of a hotel filled with seventy officers. Writing to his mother at the end of 1917 and looking back on the past year, he writes: "I go out of this year a poet—as which I did not enter it . . The tugs have left me, I feel the great swelling of the open sea taking my galleons", but less than six months later he is writing: "I am already old for a poet, and so little is yet achieved . . . " When he was working on his translation of the *Song of Roland*, Charles Scott Moncrieff sought Owen's criticism and advice, originally dedicating his work "to Mr. W. O." but subsequently on publication in 1919, instead of the dedication, it contained a sonnet in memory of Owen—as one of a group of sonnets in memory of three friends. In 1918 there was talk of publishing Owen's poems, and William Heinemann was considering the project, but at the end of July Owen returned to France and to the Front. On September 22nd he wrote to Sassoon, "You said it would be a good thing for my poetry if I went back. That is my consolation for feeling a fool. This is what shells scream at me every time: "Haven't you got the wits to keep out of this?" . . . and later: "It is a strange truth, that your 'Counter-Attack' frightened me much more than the real one. . . . I shall feel again as soon as I dare, but now I must not. I don't take the cigarette out of my mouth when I write Deceased over their letters . . ." In the last few weeks of the war Wilfred Owen was awarded the M.C., but just a week before the armistice—on the 4th November, 1918—while helping his men to bridge the Sambre Canal—he was killed. At the time of his death he had very definitely in mind a published volume, and amongst his papers were found the "Preface" and "Contents" table; two years later—in December, 1920—his friend and fellow-poet, Sassoon, published Owen's poems, and in 1931 Edmund Blunden edited an enlarged collection, with a memoir.

Although Owen is usually termed a "war-poet", yet his poetry is not all of it

"war poetry". It was inevitable that his subjects should mainly be drawn from his harrowing experiences, but had he lived he would very probably have written just as well on other themes. His sonnet "Music", written in the winter of 1916-17 makes great use of alliteration and onomatopoeia:

"I have been urged by earnest violins
And drunk their mellow sorrows to the slake
Of all my sorrows and my thirsting sins . . .
Huge chords have wrought me mighty: I have hurled
Thuds of God's thunder. And with old winds pondered
Over the curse of this chaotic world,
With low lost winds that maundered as they wandered."

Throughout his work, the use of these two poetic devices is prominent; in "Exposure", for instance,

"Sudden successive flights of bullets struck the silence.
Less deadly than the air that shudders black with snow,
With sidelong flowing flakes that flock, pause and renew,
We watch them wandering up and down the wind's nonchalance . . ."

Owen's mastery over words and his effectual use of the short line and imperfect rhyme is shown in "Fragment: It is not death!" (In some anthologies entitled "The Young Soldier".)

"It is not death
Without hereafter
To one in dearth
Of life and its laughter.

Nor the sweet murder
Death slow and even
Unto the martyr
Smiling at heaven.

It is the smile
Faint as a waning myth
Faint and exceeding small
On a boy's murdered mouth."

The young officer whose very keen sensitiveness to beauty and ugliness suffered so intensely in the trenches wrote:

Happy are these who lose imagination:
They have enough to carry with ammunition."

The study in four parts, entitled "S.I.W." (self-inflicted wound) contains all the bitter satire and cynicism of the disillusionment and futility of the war, so often portrayed by Sassoon in such poems as "Memorial Tablet". The same bitter note underlies Owen's "Futility":

"Move him into the sun—
Gently its touch awoke him once, . . .
. . . If anything might rouse him now
The kind old sun will know . . .
. . . Was it for this the clay grew tall?
—O what made fatuous sunbeams toil
To break earth's sleep at all?"

This sounds rather akin to the philosophy of A. E. Housman. Perhaps the most terribly poignant of all his poems in its cynicism and feeling is the one entitled

"A Terre (being the philosophy of many soldiers)", beginning "Sit on the bed, I'm blind, and three parts shell . . ." Another version of this poem—"Wild with all regrets"—is dedicated to Siegfried Sassoon and is dated "December, 1917".

Wilfred Owen's imaginative war poetry reached its climax in the unfinished poem "Strange meeting", of which Edmund Blunden in his edition includes various discarded M.S. readings. The young soldier finds himself suddenly away from the noise of warfare, "It seems that out of battle I escaped Down some profound dull tunnel", and in the "sullen hall" of Hell comes face to face with the young soldier whom—as his enemy—he killed the previous day. The effective use of faulty rhyme adds much to the combined realism and imagery of this poem.

Frank Nicholson, then Librarian of Edinburgh University, who met Owen during his stay at Craiglockhart, writes: "He told me of his idea of substituting a play of vowels for pure rhyme and spoke of the effects that could be obtained from this device with an engaging assurance and perhaps a touch of wilfulness like that of a child insisting, half humorously and half defiantly, that he is in the right". And that idea of his has made his work immortal.

By some Owen is acclaimed as the greatest of the war poets: others would append to this statement "except for ——", but at all events his place amongst his contemporaries is a very high one and had he lived he might have surpassed all of them; and while one of these was writing "Blow out, you bugles, over the Rich Dead!"—one of the war sonnets which fired the patriotic fever of the Englishman—Owen produced the parallel or complementary sonnet, his "Anthem for Doomed Youth":

What passing bells for these who die as cattle?
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons.

No mockeries for them from prayers or bells,
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,—
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.
What candles may be held to speed them all?
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
Shall shine the holy glimmers of good-byes,
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;
Their flowers the tenderness of silent minds,
And each slow dusk a drawing down of blinds—"

ATHALIE BUSHNELL.

Lines

O NEVER, please,
Let sorrow's plough
Drive furrows deep
Across that brow:
And never let
Your bright eyes weep;
Such stars as these
Should never set.

And may the roses
Of your lips
(Where true love sips
His own, his all)
Be ever posies
Freshly made,
And never fade
And never fall.

John Godley.

Thrush-Songs

THE square resounds to a thrush,
And has for many a year,
His song is a blush
On my cheek, and a tear.

He sings the sun like a loon,
The stars with equal allure,
He sings to the moon
As a king to the poor.

He shouts not loud for the fame,
Nor croaks, implores for his bread,
Nor schemes with his brain,
Yet the world lifts its head.

Now autumn comes, now the springs,
Now dusk. Come vespers in rains,
Come snow, still he rings
All the air with refrains.

So many times have I passed
To hear aloud in the crush,
One thought at the last,
Will be songs of the thrush.

E. R. Edwards.

I Know a Valley

I KNOW a valley
where no mortal foot
has trodden
for a hundred thousand years.

It lies asleep
between two purple hills
that guard and keep
its virgin solitudes.

A tiny stream
runs twinkling there
and laughs and babbles
between shining stones;
and wild things gather there
with shining eyes
and fluttering wings,
and little furry beasts
with quivering ears
and tiny pattering feet.

And I will take my harp there
and I will sing my songs there,

and all the furry things
and fluttering wings
will gather there
to listen to the music
of my strings.

I will lie down there
thanking my God for grass
and every living thing:
for every weed that grows
for trees and winds and rain
and clouds;
for eyes that see
and ears that hear.

* * *

And I will praise the Lord
that I can breathe
the air of Freedom
'neath an English sky.

William Booth.

Fear

TIGERS leaping like striped lightning
Through the jungle of my brain
Turn and maul the hounds of sleeping
Nor will let them go again.
Down long glades that know no sun
Naked, striped, alone I run
Till the kindness of the dawn
Greets my bleeding feet with balm.
As I claw my frenzied way
From the darkness to the day
(Light will send security!)
Over my doomed head I see
Beckoning, threatening, bowed and bending,
Fear beginning,
Fear unending.

Cynthia Palmer.

Tell Me!

TELL me if beauty
Ever surpasses
The delicate charm
Of growing grasses
If ever fountain
Fall so gracefully
Or master craftsman
Make a filigree
That half compares with this!
Tell me if beauty
Ever surpasses
The delicate charm
Of growing grasses.

Ann Thompson.

The Influence of Medical Poets on English Poetry

(Presidential address to the Section of the History of Medicine, Royal Society of Medicine, 3rd October, 1945, by Sir Arthur Salusbury MacNalty, K.C.B., M.A., M.D., F.R.C.P.)

"*It is well known that Apollo was the God of Medicine, but also the President of Parnassus.*

"*And so it is no wonder that in later ages many of the children of medicine, afflated with the divine fire, tried to express the mysteries of their art in verse and to contribute to the world their salutary songs:*" Preface to *Myologia Hericoo Carmine Expressa*, by Dr. Charles Spon, physician to King Louis XIV, printed in Manget's *Bibliotheca anatomica.*

These words remind me of the contribution that members of the medical profession have made to poetry. The number of medical poets is very numerous. C. L. Dana(1) in his bibliographical work *Poetry and the Doctors*, gives a list of 156 names, and this list is not altogether complete.

As Dana wrote: "I presume that a reason for the doctor's frequent digression into the high fields of song is because genuinely successful physicians must have some feeling and imagination; such men see and recognize and are responsive to the emotional and human side of life. They sympathize with trouble and are touched by the conflicts of those with whom they have to deal". And so these children of Apollo lay aside the rod of Aesculapius and take up the lyre.

This association of the Muses with Medicine began in the distant past. The philosophy of Empedocles (B.C. 500) was written in heroic verse and Empedocles contributed two or three epigrams to the Greek Anthology. Those who love the poetry of Theocritus, who flourished at Syracuse *circa* 282 B.C., will remember his friend Nicias, the physician-poet. When Nicias was disappointed in love, Theocritus bade him turn to poetry as a consolation.(2)

"Methinks all nature hath no cure for Love,
Plaster or unguent, Nicias, saving one:
And this is light and pleasant to a man,
Yet hard withal to compass—minstrelsy.
As well thou wottest, being thyself a leech,
And a prime favourite of those Sisters nine."

Nicias was consoled and married "Theugenis of the dainty feet". She was a good housewife and hence we have from Theocritus that delightful idyll of "The Distaff".(2) In sending her an ivory distaff, the poet wrote:

"To the home I now transfer thee of a man who knows full well
Every craft whereby men's bodies dire diseases may repel;
There to live in sweet Miletus. Lady of the Distaff she
Shall be named and oft reminded of her poet-friend by thee."

It would take many meetings of this Section to trace the lives and writings of medical poets down the centuries. Neither can we linger to speak of technical medical poets like Fracastorius who wrote the famous

Epic on Syphilis, the Spaniard Diego del Cobo, author of a surgery in verse, Charles Spon, who described in hexameters the origin and insertion of the muscles in the human body, or Sir Samuel Garth, M.D. (Cantab), F.R.C.P., who wrote *The Dispensary.*

My subject is to inquire how medical poets have helped to develop and adorn British poetry, and to see how far their training and experience as practitioners of medicine enabled them to do so. To aid me in this task I have chosen certain doctors as exemplars, whose claim to sit on the heights of Parnassus can hardly be challenged. They are representative of stages in the history of English poetry and their influence upon it has been important and far-reaching.

Chaucer, Spenser and the Elizabethan Age

Chaucer is one of the greatest English poets, and in the *Canterbury Tales* describes a Doctour of Phisyk "grounded in astronomye", familiar with medical writings, "a verrey parfit practisour". This physician was a man of classical culture, for his tale of the hapless Virginia is taken from Titus Livius. There is some hint here of the association between medicine and poetry, and earlier still John of Gaddesden, M.D. Oxford (b. 1280) was something of a poet, for his *Rosa Anglica* contains many apt verses.

In Chaucer's poetry can be traced three distinct periods: the French period when he began to write in France; the Italian period, when he went to Italy for the king on two diplomatic missions, in which his poems bear the influence of the Renaissance and of the classics; and the English period when (except in the borrowing of his subjects) he became entirely English. But the origins of all poetry lie in the Greek and Latin poets. Many of our greatest poets have quaffed deep draughts of the Pierian Spring, and knowledge of the classics has enriched English poetry from Chaucer down to Robert Bridges.

After Chaucer English poetry languished until the Elizabethan age, when its rejuvenation was splendid and glorious. The apparent suddenness of the great literary outburst of the days of Spenser and Shakespeare has been an object of wonder. It was heralded when poetry was revived as an art in the amorist poetry of Wyatt and Surrey—"sonnets mingled with lyrical pieces after the manner of Petrarca". The sonnet is the most classical form of verse. It consists of fourteen lines of ten syllables, or five feet, each, the favourite Elizabethan grouping being three staves of four lines with alternate rhymes and a final rhymed couplet. It was brought to its highest perfection by Shakespeare, who, also, demonstrated what high flights could be attained by Surrey's other experiments in blank verse.

Edmund Spenser is among the very greatest of our poets. In 1569, when yet a schoolboy at Merchant Taylors, as is well known, he contributed to a small volume, a miscellany of verse and prose entitled: *A Theatre, wherein be represented as wel the miseries and calamities that follow the voluptuous worldlings as also the greate joys and pleasures which the faithfull*

do enjoy. An argument both profitable and delectable to all that sincerely love the Word of God. Devised by S. John Vander Noodt. It contained translations from Marot's version of one of the canzoni of Petrarca and from some sonnets by Du Bellay, which were afterwards included in Spenser's *Complaints* of 1591. What is not so well known is that Van der Noodt was a refugee Flemish physician. Hence it was a medical editor who recognized and encouraged Spenser's youthful genius and first brought his poetry to public notice. Spenser recreated English prosody, giving it fluidity and grace and extending its range; he created English poetic diction. As E. de Selincourt ([3]) observes: "By means of this rich and varied style, fully expressive of his high seriousness, his spirituality, his inexhaustible sense of beauty, he has exercised a spell that has been potent for three centuries, and none has called so many poets to their vocation".

Spenser is "the poet's poet". Sir Walter Scott said of his own youth, "But Spenser I could have read for ever". Cowley states that he was drawn to poetry by reading his mother's copy of *The Faerie Queene* (Essay XI, On Myself); and Keats, who read *The Faerie Queene* at sixteen, had the stream of his inspiration long coloured by the rich soil over which it flowed, as Lord Houghton([4]) phrased it. Remembering these instances, we may discount Macaulay's([5]) carping criticism on the tediousness of the allegory.

An early admirer and imitator of Spenser was Phineas Fletcher (1582-1650). Fletcher was a clergyman, an M.A. and B.D. of Cambridge. His chief work is *The Purple Island or the Isle of Man* (1633), a poem in twelve cantos of seven-line stanzas. The island is the body of man, the bones are the foundations, the veins stand for brooks and so forth. The description includes an account of the vices and virtues to which man is subject and there are copious anatomical notes in prose. The poem is in fact a medical allegory.

The poetry of Elizabeth's reign ran parallel to the growth of the national life. The first years after 1580 reveal an ardent youthful spirit, a poetry of love and romance and imagination; later on, with discovery and the ever-present threat of Spanish aggression, there was a great outburst of national enthusiasm, as shown by the historical plays and patriotic poems. Later still, national thought became graver and poetry grew more philosophical.

Thomas Campion

In 1605 William Camden, the historian, published *Remains of a Larger Work concerning Britain*, in which the following passage occurs: "These may suffice for some poetical descriptions of our ancient poets: if I would come to our own time, what a world could I present to you out of Sir Philipp Sidney, Ed. Spenser, Samuel Daniel, Hugh Holland, Ben Johnson, Th. Campion, Michael Drayton, George Chapman, John Marston, William Shakespeare and other most pregnant wits of these our times, whom succeeding ages may justly admire". In this illustrious galaxy we find the

name of a medical poet, Thomas Campion, and the passage proves the high esteem in which he was held by his contemporaries.

We owe our knowledge of Thomas Campion, poet, musician and physician, in great part to Sir Sylvanus Vivian, (*) who has written his life and edited his works.

Thomas Campion, M.D. (1567-1619) was educated at Peterhouse, Cambridge, but took no degree there. Some Campions were Roman Catholics—Edmund Campion, the first of the English Jesuit martyrs, was possibly a member of the same family—but the poet appears to have been a moderate Anglican.* He received, as his scholarship shows, a sound classical education. He was admitted a member of Gray's Inn in 1586, and wrote a song, "Of Neptune's Empire let us sing," for the Gray's Inn Masque in 1594, but he was never called and in his Latin epigrams reveals a distaste for the law.

There is a reference to Campion as a poet in George Peele's *Honour of the Garter,* published in 1593, so by that time his unprinted English poems were known to his friends. His book of Latin epigrams was published in 1594, but it was not until 1601 that his first collection of English poems, *A Book of Airs,* appeared.

Poetic criticism began in the Elizabethan Age and indicates the interest shown in poetry. William Webbe, George Puttenham, Sir Philip Sidney and Gabriel Harvey all produced critical discourses. The subject attracted Campion, who published *Observations in the Art of English Poesie* (1602), in which he animadverted against "the vulgar and unartificial custom of riming", and advocated the substitution of classical metres, chiefly the iambic and trochaic, for the usual rhymed verse.

The same year brought forth a counterblast, entitled *An Apologie for Ryme,* from Samuel Daniel in which he termed Campion "a man of fair parts and good reputation", and deplored that the attack should have come from one "whose commendable rhymes, albeit now himself an enemy to rhyme, have given heretofore to the world the best notice of his worth".

Ben Jonson told Drummond of Hawthornden(*) that he had written a "Discourse of Poesie" both against Campion and Daniel, "wher he proves couplets to be the bravest sort of verses", but this never saw the light. As Vivian remarks, Campion's practice was fortunately unaffected by his precept.

In 1606 Campion wrote a short poetic foreword to Barnabe Barnes's *Four Books of Offices* inscribed "In Honour of the Author by Tho. Campion, Doctor in Physic. This is the first record of his profession. At what University he obtained his medical degree is unknown. Vivian agrees with Dr. Jessop that for special reasons Campion probably studied medicine at one of the Continental Universities. His second collection of Latin

* Vivian(*) notes (p. xxvii) that no sincere Catholic, however loyal, could have alluded to Queen Elizabeth as "Faith's pure shield, the Christian Diana". See also *Poemata, Ad Thamesin* and *Thomas Campion and the Art of English Poetry,* by Thomas MacDonagh, Dublin, 1913, p. 9.

epigrams (1619) contains numerous allusions to physicians or their art and one of the epigrams in Book II, '*Ad Lectorem*', explains that since the publication of the earlier book in 1594 he had turned to more sober studies—medicine and music—and implies that he had to work for his living. He was then a practising physician and is referred to in a satirical poem "Of London Physicians" found in the MS. commonplace book of a Cambridge scholar (*circa* 1611):

"How now Doctor Campion,
Musick's and poesie's stout Champion,
Will you nere leave prating?"

On the occasion of the marriage of Frances Howard, Countess of Essex, with Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset, Campion wrote a masque for it. It will be remembered that this precious pair were concerned together with Sir Gervase Elwes, the Lieutenant of the Tower, in the poisoning of Sir Thomas Overbury, who had opposed the marriage. When later on the crime was divulged, Sir Thomas Monson, a leading Roman Catholic, was imprisoned in the Tower for alleged complicity in the murder and was professionally attended there by Campion. Campion, himself, was examined regarding money he had received from Alderman Elwes, father of Sir Gervase Elwes, for the use of Monson. The latter was pardoned in 1617; and Campion dedicated his *Third Book of Airs* to him with congratulations that "those clouds which lately overcast Your fame and fortune are dispersed at last".

Campion was not altogether a kindly man; he had his enmities and antipathies, as the epigrams show. He fell out with Chapman, Barnes, Nicholas Breton and others. But he had many friendships and admired Spenser, to whom he addressed a Latin distich. He is chiefly renowned as a lyrical poet. It is the lyrics in his masques which please one, for the masques show little sense of dramatic feeling or construction. W. E. Henley described him as "a curious metrist" and Vivian (7) writes: "Campion's metres are not only curious, but sometimes perplexing; and occasionally they almost baffle analysis. . . . Neverthless, the general effect of these shifting metres is exceedingly beautiful". And he goes on to point out that Campion's songs were written primarily and solely for musical composition and wedded to his own music.

Here is the first verse of Campion's "Cherry-Ripe", which reveals the beauty of his muse:

"There is a garden in her face
Where roses and white lilies blow;
A heavenly paradise is that place,
Wherein all pleasant fruits do flow;
There cherries grow which none can buy
Till 'Cherry-ripe' themselves do cry."

Vivian(7) sums up the high place which Campion takes in English poetry in the following words: "In every one of the songs we take up there is some new charm, either of fancy, metre or diction, for his poetry is

almost infinitely various, and always fresh and vivid. Even when matched for beauty of expression or surpassed for wealth of imagination, he is still a master of subtle cadences, a lord of haunting rhythms and delicate measures, whom in his kingdom few have approached and certainly none have excelled".

The Caroline Devotional Poets

Campion, in his devotional poems exhibits, as A. R. Bullen(9) said, a rare combination of spiritual fervour and lyrical beauty, and some reference is appropriate to the devotional element in English poetry, which was a feature of the period between James I and the Restoration. The Caroline poets, as they are called, were either love poets or religious poets. Often, as in the case of Herrick and Crashaw, they wrote in both veins. That "sweet singer", George Herbert, is by the purity and devotion of his poems beloved by all. Other devotional poets were Giles Fletcher, Henry Vaughan, John Donne, William Habington, George Wither and Francis Quarles.

The medical poets take their share in this religious interlude. Not only Thomas Campion and Henry Vaughan but also Sir Thomas Browne, M.D. (Leyden and Oxon.) (1605-1682) wrote religious verse. The *Religio Medici* and his other prose writings are full of poetic feeling. Bulwer Lytton(10) wrote in 1836: "The *Religio Medici* is one of the most beautiful prose poems in the language; its power of diction, its subtlety and largeness of thought, its exquisite conceits and images, have no parallel out of the writers of that brilliant age, when Poetry and Prose had not yet divided their domain, and the Lyceum of Philosophy was watered by the Ilissus of the Nine". The poetic character of Browne's writings has since been enlarged upon by Pater(11), by Gosse(12) and by Saintsbury.(13) We possess a few specimens of Sir Thomas's poetry in the three verse pieces in *Religio Medici*, in a number of bits of doggerel, and one that is beautiful in his "Evening Hymn":

"Sleep is a death: oh, make me try
By sleeping, what it is to die;
And then as gently lay my head
Upon my grave, as now my bed:
Howe'er I rest, great God, let me
Awake again at last with thee."

It is by his prose and not by his metrical effusions that Sir Thomas Browne ranks as a medical poet.

Abraham Cowley and the Metaphysical Poets

With the passing of the spacious times of Queen Elizabeth, the fresh and impassioned poetry of her reign, which had glowed with youthful life and national fervour, grew chill, and poets tried to produce by far-fetched images, coined and extravagant words and over-fanciful expressions, the same results which ardent feeling had inspired. They were

encouraged in this fantastic course by the approval of their pedantic monarch, King James I, who wrote poems himself.

It is sometimes said that in the decline of the greater poetry of the Elizabethan period a "metaphysical school" arose, of which Donne was the founder or the first eminent member. Professor Dowden(14) remarked that this so-called "metaphysical school" never existed. Much of Donne's characteristic poetry belongs to the reign of Elizabeth, but the delight in subtleties of thought, in over-ingenious fantasies, in far-fetched imagery, in curiosity of expression was accentuated in the reigns of James I and Charles I. A leading exponent of these metaphysical flights was Abraham Cowley, M.D. (Oxon.). He was born in London in 1618, the seventh and posthumous child of Thomas Cowley, a stationer. He is the most precocious of poets, for he published *Poetical Blossoms*, a collection of five juvenile poems in 1633, which includes "The tragical history of Pyramus and Thisbe", written when he was ten years old, and "Constantia and Philetus", written two years after. Educated at Westminster School, he wrote at the age of 16 a pastoral comedy called *Love's Riddle*, but he found difficulty in learning Latin and Greek grammar. In 1637 he became a scholar of Trinity College, Cambridge (B.A., 1639; "minor fellow", 1640; M.A., 1642). On 12th March, 1641, Prince Charles was entertained at Cambridge by Cowley's improvised comedy, *The Guardian*. In 1658 this was rewritten and performed as *The Cutter of Coleman Street* in 1661 at Lincoln's Inn Fields, when Pepys was present. Cowley wrote the greater part of his ponderous epic the *Davideis* at Cambridge. It was published in his collected poems in 1656. Originally planned to occupy twelve books and to culminate with the lament of David for Jonathan, he mercifully found "neither the appetite nor leisure" to complete more than four books.

A staunch Royalist, Cowley was ejected from Cambridge by the Parliament in 1643-4 and found a refuge in St. John's College, Oxford. At Oxford he obtained court favour through his satire, *The Puritan and Papist;* and in 1646 when Oxford surrendered, he followed Queen Henrietta Maria to Paris. He became secretary to Jermyn, afterwards Earl of St. Albans and was employed in various diplomatic missions to Jersey, Holland and elsewhere. He also conducted the correspondence in cipher between the Queen and Charles I. In spite of his poem, "The Chronicle", in which he mentions a number of successive loves, Barnes (*Anacreon*, 1705, xxxii) states that Cowley was never in love but once in his life and then never dared to avow his passion. Pope says the lady was one Leonora, who married his biographer's brother.

In 1656 Cowley was sent to England to obtain information for the Royalist cause. He was arrested by mistake for another person and released on bail for £1,000, Dr. (afterwards Sir Charles) Scarborough—to whom one of his odes is addressed—becoming his security. Cowley was created M.D. at Oxford on 2nd December, 1657, by an order from the Government. This acquiescence in the Commonwealth gave great

offence to his friends, but Dr. Sprat states that he only took to medicine as a blind for his real designs. Sir John Squire tells me that Cowley's choice of Oxford for his medical degree was probably a matter of convenience. He was a loyal son of Cambridge, and his sentiments would not have been in accord with those of Dryden, also a Cambridge man, who wrote:

"*Oxford* to him a dearer name shall be
Than his own Mother University:
Thebes did his green, unknowing Youth ingage;
He chuses *Athens* in his riper age."

(*Prologue to the University of Oxford.* Miscellanies, 1684.)

Cowley never attempted practice. He contemplated at one time abandoning poetry and busying himself in some obscure retreat in America. Considering botany as necessary to a physician, he retired into Kent to gather plants and composed in Latin several books, of which the first and second treat of the qualities of herbs, in elegiac verse; the third and fourth the beauties of flowers, in various measures; and the fifth and sixth, the use of trees, in heroic numbers. He became one of the early Fellows of the Royal Society and wrote an ode to it. He was associated with John Evelyn and others in a project for the foundation of a philosophical college, for which he sets out a detailed plan in his essays. His later poems bear frequent allusions to medicine and the sciences, some not altogether felicitous, and his "Ode to Hobbes" betokens his lively interest in the new speculations of the time.

After the Restoration Cowley was an unsuccessful applicant for the mastership of the Savoy, but he was eventually solaced by a favourable lease of lands belonging to the Queen. This enabled him to seek the country retirement he had so often desired.

"O founts! Oh, when in you shall I
Myself eased of unpeaceful thoughts espy?
O fields! O woods! When, when shall I be made
The happy tenant of your shade?
Here's the spring-head of Pleasure's flood!
Here's wealthy Nature's treasury
Where all the riches lie that she
Has coined and stamped for good."

Cowley went to Barn Elms and afterwards, in 1665, settled in the "Porch House" at Chertsey. But, like many another, retirement did not suit him, judging from a letter he wrote to Bishop Sprat. His health declined and he died on 28th July, 1667. He was buried with great pomp in Westminster Abbey, and Charles II declared that Mr. Cowley had not left a better man behind him in England.

Thomas Sprat (1636-1713), Bishop of Rochester, wrote Cowley's Life in 1668. This versatile divine, the historian of the Royal Society, when at Oxford wrote a medical poem, *The Plague of Athens* (1659). This was not the typhus described by Thucydides, but the severe epidemic which had

recently ravaged Naples. Sprat suggests that the physicians themselves helped innocently to disseminate the plague.

Abraham Cowley's poetry had a great vogue in his time. His poems entitled *The Mistress* were the favourite love poems of the day. Dryden and Congreve extolled him but, while appreciating his wit and genius, they realised that his poetry had all the faults of the metaphysical cult—extravagance, obscurity and harshness, the last predominant in his Pindaric Odes. Dr. Johnson analyses these faults of Cowley's poetry with copious illustrations, in his life of the poet. Pope, who had eulogised Cowley in *Windsor Forest*, exclaimed in 1737:

"Who now reads Cowley? If he pleases yet,
His moral pleases, not his pointed wit;
Forgot his epic, nay Pindaric art,
But still I love the language of his heart."
(*Epistle to Augustus*, 75-78.)

When Cowley released himself from metaphysical trammels, his poetry was natural and unaffected, as in the verse previously quoted. His lyrical poems survive in modern anthologies and his essays are poetic, simple and graceful. His more correct phrasing and versification influenced the poetry of Dryden and Pope. In all he played no inconsiderable part in the development of the intellectual poetry of the neo-Augustan age, which displaced the metaphysical poets.

Henry Vaughan, the Silurist

Another metaphysical medical poet was Henry Vaughan, M.D., "the Silurist". He was born at Newton, on the Usk, near Brecon, in 1621, the son of Henry Vaughan, educated along with his twin brother, Thomas, by the Rev. Matthew Herbert, Rector of Llangattock, where both brothers acquired a good knowledge of classical literature and penned Latin elegiacs to their preceptor. In 1638 they matriculated at Jesus College, Oxford. Their studies were interrupted by the Civil War. The two brothers fought on the King's side, and Henry speaks in one of his poems "of having been torn from the side" of a dear young friend, R. W., in the battle of Rowton Heath, near Chester, 1645.* Thomas afterwards took orders, was expelled from his living by the Parliament, and became a chemist, an alchemist, a mystic and a Latin poet. He died in 1665, and his brother in a poem entitled "Daphnis" lamented his death.

Henry Vaughan published his first book of poems, including "the tenth satyre of Juvenal Englished", in 1646. He studied medicine in London and became M.D., but of what University is unknown. He retired at first to Brecon, and afterwards worked in his native place as a country practitioner for the rest of his life, dying on April 23, 1695, at the age of 73.

* The late Miss Gwenllian Morgan, F.S.A., discovered that Henry Vaughan enlisted in Sir Herbert Price's regiment at the outbreak of the Civil War and served throughout with this regiment.

Vaughan, writing to Aubrey towards the end of his life, said: "My profession allso is physic, which I have practised now for many years with good successe (thanke God) and a repute big enough for a person of greater parts than myself".

Thomas Vaughan brought out a second volume of his brother's poems and translations, entitled *Olor Iscanus* ("the swan of the Usk") in 1647. About this time Henry Vaughan had a severe and lingering illness; this turned the character of his muse, which thenceforward dwelt only on religious and mystical subjects. In writing poetry of this character, he was much influenced by the poems of George Herbert. He composed a number of little "Sacred Poems and Pious Ejaculations" and printed them in a book entitled *Silex Scintillans* ("Sparks from the flintstone") in 1650. In 1652 appeared a little book of devotions in prose, *The Mount of Olives* and another prose work, *Flores Solitudinis,* came out in 1654. A second edition of *Silex Scintillans,* with further poems, was published in 1655. A book brought out by one of his zealous Oxford friends, "J. W." in 1678, was called *Thalia Rediviva; the passtimes and diversions of a Countrey Muse.* It consisted almost entirely of poems by Henry Vaughan, together with a few of his brother Thomas's Latin verses, but, like *Olor Iscanus*, Henry Vaughan was not responsible for the publication. In his life-time, except for the appreciation of his Oxford friends, he had no success either in poetry or prose. Hence for the remaining forty years of his life he published nothing, shunned public life and occupied himself in his profession and with the education of his family.

Vaughan sometimes lapses into the extravagance and affectation of wit characteristic of the metaphysical poets, but his poetry is a rare gift to the world. As Richard Garnett([15]) said: "Vaughan's position among English poets is not only high, but in some respects unique. The pervading atmosphere of mystic rapture rather than isolated fine things, constitutes the main charm of his poems". Two of his poems, "The Retreat" and "They are all gone into the world of light", take place among the finest in the English language.

Of late years there has been an enhanced appreciation of the metaphysical poets, notably as regards the poems of John Donne and Henry Vaughan. Abraham Cowley has not benefited by this revived interest.

Milton's Influence on Poetry

Humbert Wolfe ([16]) observed: "In every period there are distinguished writers who do not influence and are not influenced by their contemporaries in the sphere of creation". Such a writer was John Milton (1608-1674), who wrote in a grave and natural manner and "raised in song the moral passions into a solemn splendour". He stands apart, the last of the elder school of poetry. The new school of poetry personified by Dryden and Pope admired Milton but did not dare to voice their admiration. Dryden made "Paradise Lost" into an opera, the "State of Innocence", and turned Milton's sonorous blank verse into rhyming couplets. "Ay,

you may *tag* my verses if you will," were the words in which the blind poet gave his contemptuous consent to the desecration.

Milton's writings influenced a later generation of poets, and in particular two great medical poets. *Hyperion* owed so much to Milton that Keats shrank from completing it. Robert Bridges made experiments in Miltonic metres, and in his writings, *On the elements of Milton's Blank Verse in Paradise Lost* (1887), *On the Prosody of Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes* (1889), in *Ibant Obscuri* and elsewhere, he made curious inquisition into the sources of Milton's metrical effects.

The Neo-Augustan Age: Dryden and Pope

It is germane here to note how greatly philosophy, the natural sciences and medicine directed the poetry of the neo-Augustan age, which was at its height during the reign of Queen Anne.* Hobbes attacked the metaphysical conception of wit by associating it with judgment. The foundation of the Royal Society in 1662 aroused great interest in the growth of experimental science and the study of natural phenomena. Distrust of metaphysics became increasingly evident. Poetry became precise, clear and free from hyperbole and the poets listened to the natural philosophers; Dryden, for instance, was a Fellow of the Royal Society.

The poetry of the neo-Augustan age displayed the following features. It was hostile to enthusiasm, licence and extravagance; it dealt with the world, man and nature; it owed a great deal to the classics, for no man was then regarded as educated without a classical education; it sparkled with wit and personal allusions; it founded a new school of satirical poetry which in the heights achieved by Dryden and Pope has never been equalled or surpassed. But, as Lytton Strachey(17) said, it has no mysteries and infinitudes. It was a reasonable, clear and sensible poetry, and that was all the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries required.

There were many medical wits and poets in this age. While not pre-eminent, they had their share in fanning the divine spark which flamed in Dryden and Pope. John Arbuthnot, M.D. (Aberdeen and Cantab), F.R.C.P., was a master of satire, and the devoted friend of Pope and Swift. In his association with them in the *Martin Scriblerus* Club, his prose satiric writings influenced the prose of Swift and the poetry of Pope. Arbuthnot wrote in his last letter to Pope, "study more to *reform* than *chastise* though the one cannot be effected without the other". In the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* (*Prologue to the Satires*) Pope writes:

> "Friend to my life (which did not you prolong,
> The world had wanted many an idle song)."

We are reasonably assured that Arbuthnot stimulated Pope's poetic gifts by his conversation and counsel as well as by his medical care.

* This theme is well developed in a recent study of the subject by R. L. Sharp, entitled *From Donne to Dryden: The Revolt against Metaphysical Poetry*, 1940, University of North Carolina Press.

In the same Epistle, Pope speaks with gratitude of the poet-physician, Sir Samuel Garth, also a friend of Dryden, as one of the encouragers of his youthful genius:

"Well natur'd *Garth* inflam'd with early praise,
And *Congreve* lov'd, and *Swift* endur'd my lays."

Another medical poet of this time was Sir Richard Blackmore, M.D. (Padua), F.R.C.P. (1653-1729), whose epic *Prince Arthur* (1695) was admired by John Locke, while his *Creation, a philosphical poem demonstrating the Existence and Providence of God* (1712) was praised by Addison, by Dr. Johnson and even by the splenetic John Dennis. Alas! we have to admit that Blackmore's name is now chiefly known as one of the poetasters pilloried in the *Dunciad.* Gosse([28]) said of Blackmore: "As an epic poet not even Phoebus Apollo could have resuscitated him".

There is, however, one medical poet belonging, in spirit if not strictly in time, to this period, worthy of mention. This is Mark Akenside, M.D. (Leyden and Cantab), F.R.C.P., F.R.S. (1721-1770). He wrote *The Pleasures of Imagination* in 1744; and the *Hymn to the Naiads* in 1746. These works are overweighted by learning and exactitude, but Akenside had the true poetic gift and wrote some pleasing lyrics.

Directly contemporary with Akenside is Tobias Smollett, M.D. (Aberdeen) (1721-1771). He is chiefly known as a novelist, yet Sir Walter Scott regarded him as a poet of distinction (*Tobias Smollet, Lives of the Novelists*), and Isaac D'Israeli (*Calamities of Authors,* Vol. I, p. 17) wrote: "Smollett . . . is a great poet, though he has written little in verse". His poem, "Tears of Scotland," bewails the brutal severities of Cumberland's troops in the Highlands in pathetic and powerful verse; he wrote a charming lyric, "To Leven Water"; and many of the lines in his "Ode to Independence" have a fine lyric grandeur.

Erasmus Darwin

The place of Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802) as a poet is difficult to evaluate. The Lichfield physician was a forceful man and would certainly have insisted strongly upon his claims to rank as a medical poet. He was born at Elston Hall, Nottinghamshire, the fourth son of Robert Darwin. In 1741 he went to Chesterfield School, and in 1750 matriculated at St. John's College, Cambridge. While there he wrote a poem on the death of Frederick, Prince of Wales. He took his B.A. in 1754 and in the same year proceeded to Edinburgh to study medicine, taking his M.B. at Cambridge in 1755. After an unsuccessful attempt at practice at Nottingham he moved to Lichfield, where he flourished as a leading physician. George III promised to make him his own physician if he would come to London, but Darwin declined the offer. He wrote much of his poetry in his carriage while visiting patients.

In 1778 he bought eight acres at Lichfield which he turned into a botanic garden. Miss Seward wrote some verses upon it which suggested

to Darwin the theme of the "Botanic Garden". The second part of this lengthy poem, written in the versification of Pope and entitled "The Loves of the Plants" appeared anonymously in 1789. The first fifty verses were those of Miss Seward and were inserted without any acknowledgment from Dr. Darwin. The first part of the "Botanic Garden" entitled "The Economy of Vegetation" appeared in 1792 and went into a fourth edition in 1799. The poem was extolled in its day and was translated into French, Portuguese and Italian. Horace Walpole admired it and Cowper, in a joint poem with Hayley, praised it. It was parodied by Canning in the *Anti-Jacobin* as the "Loves of the Triangles", which demonstrated its absurdities. Darwin's other poems appeared posthumously, "The Temple of Nature or the Origin of Society" (with philosophical notes) in 1803, and "The Shrine of Nature" later. A collected edition of his poetical works was published in 1807. Sir Walter Scott([18]) said that Darwin's poetry belonged to a school of picturesque and florid description, of lofty metaphor and bold personification, of a diction rendered by inversion and the use of compound epithets as remote as possible from the tone of ordinary language. It was also too remote from common life and natural expression to retain its popularity. Coleridge([19]) felt the force of Darwin's poetry but compared it to the Russian palace of old, "glittering, cold and transitory". "Darwin's bad poetry", said Leslie Stephen,([20]) "showed a powerful mind". We may conclude that Erasmus Darwin was well advised when he sacrificed his early poetical impulses to his profession.

Darwin's more enduring fame rests upon his *Zoonomia* (1794-96) in which his views on evolution anticipated Lamarck. It contains many observations and principles which bear on the doctrines of evolution enunciated by his grandson, Charles Darwin, who translated Krause's *Life of Erasmus Darwin*, and added a sketch of his character and habits.

Oliver Goldsmith and George Crabbe

Towards the middle of the eighteenth century, there was a reaction against the "gaudy and inane phraseology" which marks the later diction of that time. Natural sentiments, feeling and simplicity superseded the polished verses which were coined in the brain and not in the heart. Revived interest in classical themes stimulated Thomas Gray and William Collins to seek for beauty and to hymn nature. Collin's "Ode to Evening" is not far removed from the spirit of Keats. The quiet domestic strain of Cowper's verse is another indication that poetry was reverting to the description of natural and simple scenes.

Two medical poets, Goldsmith and Crabbe, whose calling had taught them to be humane and sympathetic and to voice the "simple annals of the poor" are protagonists in this change, which heralded Wordsworth's establishment of poetry as a speech of "natural and everyday life".

Oliver Goldsmith, M.B. of Dublin and Oxford (1728-1774), wrote only two celebrated poems, "The Traveller" and "The Deserted Village", but they were sufficient to establish his reputation as a poet. Burke

exclaimed: "What true and pretty pastoral images has Goldsmith in his 'Deserted Village'! They beat all—Pope and Phillips and Spenser, too, in my opinion, that is in the pastoral, for I go no further". Goldsmith's plea for preserving the rural population is as pertinent to-day as it was in 1770:

"Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay:
Princes and lords may flourish or may fade;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made.
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride
When once destroy'd, can never be supplied."

One cannot speak of Goldsmith without thinking of Samuel Johnson. His poem, *On the Death of Mr. Robert Levet, a Practiser in Physic*, is the greatest tribute we possess to the general practitioner of medicine. You all know the poem, but I cannot resist quoting two verses:

"In Misery's darkest cavern known,
His useful care was ever nigh,
Where hopeless Anguish pour'd his groan,
And lonely Want retired to die.

No summons mock'd by chill delay,
No petty gain disdain'd by pride;
The modest wants of ev'ry day
The toil of ev'ry day supplied."

These lines epitomise the self-sacrificing life of those whom Dr. John Brown[21] called "Our Gideon Grays".

George Crabbe, surgeon and divine (1754-1832), after apprenticeship and assistant to a surgeon, "walked the hospitals" in London, married and practised in Aldeburgh among the poor. But he had already written poems and in 1779 he went to London with his manuscripts in his pocket. More fortunate than Chatterton, he found a patron in Edmund Burke, who helped him to publish *The Library* (1781), while Dr. Johnson criticized and emended his poems. He gave up medicine, took orders, had a plurality of livings, and thenceforward his lot was cast in pleasant places. He won the admiration and friendship of Walter Scott and died in his rectory at Trowbridge.

Crabbe's muse is a dark and realistic one. The sorrows and sufferings of the poor touched his heart and he saw no relief, no flutings of shepherds or dances round the maypole, in their incessant life of toil. "He was the last of the classicists in form; he was the first of the realists in matter." Beginning by imitating Pope he was faithful to the rhymed heroic couplet for all his major works to the end. His diction is sometimes strange and at times lapses into prose, but he is a powerful and impressive writer.

The Library, The Village, The Parish Register, The Borough and the *Tales of the Hall* all have their sombre force and all show traces of his medical experience. One may instance the line: "The true physician walks the

foulest ward" from *The Parish Register,* and these lines from *The Village:*

"Here on a matted flock, with dust o'erspread,
The drooping wretch reclines his languid head;
For him no hand the cordial cup applies,
Or wipes the tear that stagnates in his eyes;
No friends with soft discourse his pain beguile,
Or promise hope, till sickness wears a smile."

Crabbe's village poems are in a realistic vein of narrative poetry, which Masefield in our day, with greater art, has successfully revived in *The Widow in the Bye Street.*

Natural, Romantic and Ballad Poetry: John Leyden

Many years before Crabbe wrote, a Scottish school of poetry had emerged, which not only exalted the beauties of nature, but also gave a marked impulse to narrative and ballad poetry. James Thomson wrote the *Seasons,* Allan Ramsay and Robert Ferguson described the wit and humour of the Scottish peasantry, and later Robert Burns surpassed them in the love of nature and the description of human passion and character.

Interest awakened also in the romantic past and the historical songs and ballads. There were Gray's studies in Norse legends and the ancient poetry of Wales; Chatterton's imitations; the *Ossian* of James Macpherson which pretended to be a translation of Gaelic epics; and Percy's *Reliques.* This interest culminated in the poetry of Sir Walter Scott. "He was the last Minstrel, the last epic bard praising and calling to mind the men and exploits of an age which had passed away."

Associated with Scott's *Minstrelsy,* that collection of border ballads which led to the writing of the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* and his other poems, was a medical genius, John Leyden, M.D. (St. Andrews) (1775-1811), whose help in collecting the ballads and in writing modern versions of them Scott always appreciated and acknowledged. Leyden was the real Admirable Crichton. He was pre-eminent in the arts, medicine and the sciences and knew thirty-four languages. His poetical contributions to Lewis's *Tales of Wonder* and to the *Edinburgh Magazine* attracted attention and his poems, *Scenes of Infancy, descriptive of Teviotdale,* appeared in 1803. A surgeon and naturalist in India, he wrote on natural history, philology and literature and translated the Gospels into five languages. He was also a professor in the Bengal College and afterwards a judge in India. He died of fever at Batavia, a victim to his thirst for knowledge. His ballads take a higher place in literature than his longer poems. Scott pays this tribute to his memory in *The Lord of the Isles:*

"Quenched is his lamp of varied lore
That loved the light of song to pour;
A distant and a deadly shore
Has Leyden's cold remains."

The Revolutionary Poets and John Keats

The French Revolution had a profound influence upon the poets of the early nineteenth century. The doctrines of liberty, equality and fraternity, the natural rights that belonged to every man, were joyfully acclaimed by Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey, until the violence of the Reign of Terror and the aggression of Napoleon caused them to modify their opinions. Byron did not express these sentiments, but he was equally a revolutionary in his attacks on all the conventionality of social morality, religion and politics. He had a sympathy with nature, but his poetry is more intellectual than imaginative. Shelley's poetry is the reverse of this. It exhibits high flights of the imagination to which intellectual power though present is subordinated. Shelley in his outlook upon the moral, religious, social and political questions of his time is as revolutionary as Byron. Some of his verse, as in the *Ode to the West Wind* "form together the most sensitive, the most imaginative, and the most musical, but the least tangible lyrical poetry we possess".([22])

Into this wonderful age of poetry came John Keats (1795-1821), student of the United Hospitals of St. Thomas's and Guy's and Licentiate of the Society of Apothecaries (1816). Poetry soon claimed his entire allegiance. "My last operation," he once told Brown, "was the opening of a man's temporal artery. I did it with the utmost nicety, but reflecting on what passed through my mind at the time, my dexterity seemed a miracle, and I never took up the lancet again." Keats is the poet of beauty. He was not concerned with the problems of his day which influenced his brother poets. In his writing he was a reincarnation of the Greek spirit of poetry—"a pard-like Spirit beautiful and swift". His work in the hospital wards brought him in touch with humanity and his clinical knowledge of the malady with which he was stricken influenced the melancholy strains in his poetry, as when he wrote:

"When I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,
Before high-piled books, in charact'ry,
Hold like full garners the full-ripened grain;
When I behold upon the night's starr'd face,
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
And feel that I may never live to trace
Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance,"

or in his *Ode to a Nightingale* when he tells us "and for many a time I have been half in love with easeful death" and again in the same verse,

"Now more than ever it seems rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain."

The work that Keats did in his short life is an imperishable heritage of English poetry. He is the greatest of our medical poets and one of the greatest of the poets of all time. We can trace his far-reaching influence in the poets of the Victorian age, in Tennyson, Browning, Matthew Arnold and especially in Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Swinburne.

As Sir Sidney Colvin[23] observed, the aim of Keats was not merely to create a paradise of art and beauty remote from the cares and interests of the world. "I have loved", said Keats, "the principle of beauty in all things."

Thomas Beddoes

After this wonderful outburst of poetic fervour and enthusiasm there came, as usually happens, a period during which little poetry of permanent value was written, although Wordsworth still tuned his lyre, Tennyson had written his early poems and Browning was writing *Pauline*. During this period, which roughly corresponds to the reign of George IV (1820-1830), there was one poet who kept the torch of poetry aflame. His name is Thomas Lovell Beddoes (1803-1849), M.D. (Würzburg), and he has never received his due meed of recognition.

Beddoes was the nephew of Maria Edgeworth and the eldest son of Thomas Beddoes, M.D. (Oxon.), an eccentric and brilliant physician. The father was lecturer in Chemistry at Oxford, but had to resign the post on account of his intemperate advocacy of the principles of the French Revolution. He then practised at Clifton, where Sir Humphry Davy was his pupil and declared that "he had talents which would have exalted him to the pinnacle of philosophical eminence, if they had been applied with discretion". The words, as Lytton Strachey[24] commented, are curiously suggestive of the history of his son.

Thomas, the son, was educated at Charterhouse and Pembroke College, Oxford. At school he had written a novel, the beginnings of an Elizabethan tragedy and a good deal of verse. In 1821, while still an undergraduate, he collected some of these juvenilia into a volume, *The Improvisatore*. The next year saw the publication of *The Bride's Tragedy*, a play on the Elizabethan model, which revealed his genius as a master of dramatic blank verse. Only a true poet could have written lines like these:

> "Here's the blue violet, like Pandora's eye,
> When first it darkened with immortal life."

Note again how he unites simplicity and splendour in this comparison:

> "How glorious to live! Even, in one thought
> The wisdom of past times to fit together
> And from the luminous minds of many men
> Catch a reflected truth; as, in one eye,
> Light from unnumbered worlds and farthest planets
> Of the star-crowded universe, is gathered into one ray."

Beddoes received a laudatory review in the *Edinburgh*, written by Bryan Waller Proctor, in those days a poetic accolade.

Having taken his Arts degree at Oxford, Beddoes in 1825 began to study medicine at the University of Göttingen. He became engrossed in his profession; the new experimental work in physiology particularly interested him; and he translated Grainger's *Spinal Cord* into German and Schoenlein's *Diseases of Europeans* into English. But he could never

decide whether he wished to devote himself exclusively to physiology or to dramatic poetry. He found a fresh outlet for his adventurous spirit in the revolutionary tendencies that were then spreading over the Continent and imperilled his life on several occasions. Eventually his mind became affected and he ended his own life at Basel in 1849. He left behind him *Death's Jest Book; or The Fool's Tragedy*, a macabre and powerful dramatic play in blank verse, two unfinished tragedies, some exquisite lyrics and a poem "of grotesque and ominous humour", *The Oviparous Tailor*. Here is one great conception out of many from *Death's Jest Book:*

"I begin to hear strange but sweet sounds and the loud rocky dashing
Of waves, where time into Eternity
Falls into ruined worlds."

Sir Edmund Gosse, in collecting Beddoes's poems and letters, has disclosed the wonderful art with which this medical poet was endowed. Beddoes was in many respect a reincarnated Elizabethan. The twin heritages of Apollo, Medicine and Poetry, were always striving within him for the mastery. To the end he could never consent to give the pre-eminence to either.

Robert Bridges

Robert Seymour Bridges (1844-1930), O.M., M.B. (Oxon.), F.R.C.P., is the one medical Poet Laureate. Two other Laureates have been closely associated with Medicine. Nahum Tate (1652-1715), Poet Laureate in the reigns of William III and Queen Anne, translated the *Syphilis* of Fracastorius* and Cowley's *History of the Plants* from Latin into English verse, and Robert Southey (Poet Laureate, 1813-1843) for a short time was a medical student in the anatomy school of Oxford. We can hardly regard Southey as a medical poet, though he used his medical knowledge in some of his writings.**

By virtue of his length of days, Robert Bridges ranks as a poet of two distinct periods of history. His early work belongs to the Victorian period. He was approaching his sixtieth year when Queen Victoria died, but his poetic gifts did not receive full recognition until the twentieth century, which equally claims him.

In regard to Bridges's medical career, I may remind you that he was a student at St. Bartholomew's Hospital; house-physician for one year to Dr. Patrick Black, to whom he dedicated his Latin poem of 558 lines, *De Nosocomio Sti. Bartolomaei;* casualty physician (1877-1879), where he saw over 30,000 patients in one year; and assistant physician to the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street, and to the Great Northern Hospital. In June, 1881, an attack of pneumonia followed by an empyema, from the effects of which he did not recover for eighteen

* *Syphilis*. Written (in Latin) by that famous poet and physician, Fracastorius. English'd by Mr. Tate, London, J. Tonson, 1693, 12°.

** Notably in his body-snatching ballad, *The Surgeon's Warning*, and in his prose work, *The Doctor*, which is full of curious medical knowledge. The hero of the book is a Dr. Daniel Dove, of Doncaster, who goes his rounds on his horse, Nobs. "The wit and humour of *The Doctor*", said Edgar Allan Poe, "have seldom been equalled."

months, ended his medical career, and medicine lost what he gave to poetry.

Some have regarded Bridges as a cloistered poet, steeped in classical lore and tradition, a master of prosody, a writer of beautiful lyrics—his poem "I have loved flowers" permanently enriched the English treasury of song—a lover of Nature, but standing aloof and apart from the struggles and desires of man. His labours and experience as a physician refute this conception. Only a heart throbbing with humanity could have inspired the beautiful stanzas *On a Dead Child* and perhaps only a children's physician could have written it. The long narrative poem, *Eros and Psyche* (1885) a version of Apuleius, is a piece of charming fantasy with a spiritual meaning and moral. Compared with Pater's prose telling of the myth in *Marius the Epicurean*, the poem does not lose by the comparison, said Professor Dowden.[25]

To that great poem, *The Testament of Beauty*, the poet and the physician equally contribute. Here Bridges summed up his life's philosophy and surpassed himself. It was published in 1929 on his eighty-fifth birthday, and "in eloquence, wit and beauty of sound and imagery is unique as the work of an octogenarian".

Sir Ronald Ross

The literary and poetic gifts of Sir Ronald Ross (1857-1932) pale before his fame as the discoverer of the vector of malaria. In his slim volumes of verse there are some lovely things.

On August 20th, 1897, when he made his great discovery, he wrote these lines (which he sent in a letter to his wife), quoted from *Philosophies* by permission of Mr. John Murray, Sir Ronald's publisher:

This day relenting God
  Hath placed within my hand
A wondrous thing; and God
  Be praised. At His command

Seeking His secret deeds
  With tears and toiling breath,
I find thy cunning seeds,
  O million-murdering Death.

I know this little thing
  A myriad men will save.
O Death, where is thy sting?
  Thy Victory, O Grave?

O Exile, while thine eyes
  Were weary with the night
Thou weepedst; now arise
  And bless the Lord of Light.

Hereafter let thy lyre
  Be bondsman to His name;
His thunder and His fire
  Will fill thy lips with flame.

He is the Lord of Light;
  He is the Thing that is;
He sends the seeing sight;
  And the right mind is His.

Here, as Sir John Squire writes to me, "The Muses of Medicine and Poetry met in a single illuminated moment and looked wonderingly at each other in recognition of their sisterhood".

Poetry of the Twentieth Century

Robert Bridges was the only great medical poet who adorned the Victorian age, but the "new learning", the medical and scientific discoveries of that age exerted their influence upon its poetry and could be traced, if time permitted, in the writings of Tennyson and Browning.

Francis Thompson (1859-1907), the author of *The Hound of Heaven*, was a medical student at Owens College, Manchester. A definite reminiscence of the dissecting room is present (in an *Anthem of Earth*) in his allusion to the heart as "Arrased with purple like the house of kings".

Rudyard Kipling's poetry and prose reveal his interest in medicine, an interest strengthened by his friendships with Sir William Osler, Sir John Bland-Sutton, and Sir Alfred Webb-Johnson. In this connection, "Cholera Camp" and the lines beginning, "Wonderful herbs had our fathers of old" recur to mind.

As for the poetry of to-day, in the words of Cowley, "A war-like, various and tragical age is best to write of, but worst to write in". An estimate of the characteristics and significance of modern poetry is outside the scope of this address, even if I had the ability to undertake it. Great poets have written in the present century. Not only can we speak of Bridges and Hardy who earned their bays in the nineteenth century, but English literature has been dowered with the poems of John Masefield, Flecker, Rupert Brooke, A. E. Housman, Sir Henry Newbolt, Sir John Squire, Humbert Wolfe, Yeats, T. S. Eliot and many others.

I would here make special reference to one more "child of Apollo", Francis Brett Young, M.B. Famous as a novelist, he wrote *The Young Physician; Poems* (1919), and in 1944 he brought out his wonderful epic poem, *The Island*, which expresses the patriotic fervour of English history through the centuries up to the present time.

We have reached the end of our poetical pilgrimage, in which I have endeavoured to show how important a part medical poets have played in shaping and directing our national poetry. The influence of medicine

and natural science on English poetry is a much wider subject and here only incidental reference has been possible, as in the founding of the Royal Society in the seventeenth century and the friendship of poets with medical men. We may be justly proud of the contribution that our profession has made to English poetry. Not alone has it given exquisite lyricists like Campion, Cowley and Henry Vaughan, humane and realistic poets as were Goldsmith and Crabbe, but also two immortals, John Keats and Robert Bridges.

The study of the children of Apollo enables one important conclusion to be drawn, namely, that the Muse of Poetry tolerates no divided allegiance in the perfection of her art. This was fortunately realised by Keats when he put down his lancet to take up his wonderful lyre, and by Bridges in retiring from practice. Others have not been so perspicacious. Campion, it is true, combined the two vocations with good success. Goldsmith might have endowed the world with more poetry if the success of *The Traveller* had not led him to don the handsome roquelaure, the purple silk small-clothes, the sword, the gold-headed cane and the full-dress doctor's wig in a vain attempt to achieve success as a physician. Henry Vaughan was a country practitioner and for the remaining forty years of his life his muse was silent. Mark Akenside had a large and fashionable practice and became physician to Queen Charlotte, but thenceforward he wrote no more of those odes which Hazlitt pronounced to be superior to those of Wordsworth. Sir Richard Blackmore tried to combine the arts of medicine and poetry. He scribbled verse incessantly in coffee-houses in the intervals between consultations and in his chariot when visiting patients, and for his reward earned the derision of Pope and Swift and was bidden by his colleague, Garth, "to learn to rise in sense and sink in sound". The twin allegiance to medicine and poetry, as we have seen, perplexed Beddoes to the end of his life.

Hence, if the student of medicine receives the divine afflatus, he should decide forthwith which altar of Apollo he should serve if he desires to be pre-eminent in either vocation. Many "mute inglorious Miltons" have adorned the profession of medicine and have been aided and solaced in their art by their hidden poetic gifts. Others, like Sir Henry Halford (a descendant of Henry Vaughan) who prided himself on his Latin verses, Sir Ronald Ross, Sir Henry Head and Sir Charles Sherrington, have written poems of no inconsiderable merit in the intervals of an active professional life or in relaxation from the pursuit of important researches. To scale the supreme heights of Parnassus the medical poet must relinquish the practice of medicine, while he enriches his poetry by the knowledge of humanity, of philosophy and the love of nature and mankind which he has acquired in his profession.

It is good for English poetry that it has received so much from British medicine. It is good for British medicine that it has produced poets. Their influence is needed in these troublous and war-like times, for as Shelley wrote in *A Defence of Poetry*, "Poets are the hierophants of an

unapprehended inspiration; the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present".

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NOTE.—I desire to express my thanks to Sir John Squire and Sir Sylvanus Vivian for help in the preparation of this Address. The firm of John Murray have kindly allowed me to include some lines by Sir Ronald Ross taken from his collection of poetry, *Philosophies*, of which they are the publishers, and for the quotations from the introduction to Campion's Poetical Works I am indebted to Sir Sylvanus Vivian, the author, and Messrs. George Routledge and Sons, Limited, the publishers.—A. S. MacN.

The fine educational and cultural vision of Rabindranath Tagore in founding his community centre of Santiniketan at Bolpur in his native Bengal was described to the Royal India Society by Mr. Leonard Elmhirst, founder of Dartington Hall, who had himself taken part in the venture. He outlined the approach at Santiniketan to all aspects of Indian culture; the marrying of the religious and the secular in daily life as demonstrated in the many festivals of the seasons; research into the folk art and music and ancient literature; the cultivation of an international outlook. Tagore's approach inevitably had an impact on the whole of India—on the education of youth, on the theatre, on music, design, and architecture. Mr. Elmhirst suggested, as a British memorial to Tagore, the endowment of fellowships enabling two or three British specialists to spend a period of one or two years at Santiniketan and experience at first hand its simple and attractive synthesis of the best things of the East and the West.

For One Brief Hour

WHEN all this tortured waiting ends,
And we must meet again,
For one brief hour, oh Lord I beg,
Shut out my pain.

Keep from my voice the anxious note,
The questions from my lips,
Though fears should whirl about my head
Like angry whips.

Lead me then foolishly to talk,
Or pause the casual way,
As silently I guard the things
I dare not say.

Beat down each weakening memory,
And if this be goodbye,
Give me the courage to be hard,
And help me lie.

Give me the power to lift my eyes,
And if the worst be said,
To keep the tears within my heart,
And smile instead.

So let me talk, and let me wait,
And let a joke prevail,
And let a little coldness win
Where love must fail.

But when the hour is passed and done,
And only dreams remain,
Then give me back my suffering,
And let me weep again.

Edna Chard.

Moon Opposition Sun

I HATE this crucifixion
Slow unending crucifixion
The cold grey void in the middle of me
And at either end a flame.

The head yearns to the Father
Cries to the Father, sees the gates of home.
The feet are in the mud contentedly
The toes contentedly
And know the world as pure.

The mind is burning, for the sun
Has filled the searchlight of the eyes
And burns unceasingly
And I can see.

The body walks down pleasant avenues
And feeds its burning hunger easily
Which rises suddenly
Rises and falls again
And rises suddenly, and feeds again.

And I that dwell between unhappily
Who lust with either hand, for the Virgin's light
Or the arms of Magdalen, I am.
I have no comfort, high or low, and no content.
I wander dumbly in a void of pain
And none gives answering. I am.

Yet feet and head and either hand
Must find their centering, and rise
The third day or some other day
And leave the cross of death,
And fold the slow wings of the heart, and be.
And I shall see, and know then that I am.

Christmas Humphreys.

Paulina

ANOTHER day or so, and my reprieve
is done. Of all the loveliness I find
in you, couched like a jewel in your mind;
your hair that is black light upon your breast
and gives me bitter happiness for guest,
I take my leave.

So I sit here, telling my Rosary
counting the Aves by a candlelight
my bitten lip makes populate the night
with shadows from a swift flame's fantasy.

Shall I remember? I who have looked on love
one moment in a dream cannot forget,
fall on my knees before the amulet
that's you, and feel the cry break out above
like something caged and beating on the bars:
I have no gold to give, nor amethyst
to lay to shame against the eyes that mist
not in memory;
but this poor scholarship of well-worn words,
a beating heart
that's yours.

Edgar Jones.

Weariness

MY weariness is as a desert land,
Arid and lifeless, yet I long to creep
Into the soft allurement of the sand,
Surrendering my soul to dreamless sleep.
No leaf, no bud, no smallest seed can spring
To life in that quiet emptiness, where rest
Is no true rest, and sleep can only bring
A greater lassitude. On that scorched breast
To lie inert is but oblivion
And yields no succour—there the very sun
Drains life and gives not, and the torpid glow
Denies the strength that waits in embryo.

But if I make my weariness a sea?
A living sea that all unfathomed lies
Waiting? From the blurred surface it would be
But empty, swirling darkness; yet for eyes
Fearless to search beneath, what would it hold
Of loveliness? Had I the strength to thrust
Down through the curve of the enveloping cold,
Leaving the drowsy haze of warmth, with trust
To grasp at nothingness, to drown, to clutch
The slime and filth of bedrock's depth—how much
Of hidden richness would be yielded? Who
Can know, but those who cleave the vastness through?

Gwenda Hollander.

Saint and Sinner

I MET a Saint enshrined in grace,
Who all divine conceptions proved,
I never saw so fair a face,
Or any soul I so much loved;
But fast my hopeless feelings rose,
To gain you I had little worth,
The Sinner meeting Virtue knows
The distance Heaven is from Earth.

Your voice, your looks, so saintly seemed,
The Holy light was in your eyes,
And when you spoke my senses dreamed
Of some imagined Paradise;
Confronted by your Saintliness
How very strange it seemed to me
That I so far from Godliness
Could be so near Divinity.

Your beauty such a sense conveyed
Of all that sacredness could mean,
My mind enraptured was betrayed
In thinking Heaven stood between;

I seemed to hear sweet rhapsodies
  Echoing through unsullied skies,
Those everlasting ecstasies
  Which destiny to Life denies.

An angel is from Heaven sent
  On Earth to live in human guise,
To make some sinner penitent
  To see his guilt with tear-dimmed eyes;
You are the instrument of Fate
  To make me understand the cost,
Your vision makes me contemplate
  The happiness that I have lost.

To vanities I bid farewell,
  Remembering once I looked within
The Mansions where the Angels dwell,
  In hallowed groves remote from sin;
I grieve for my transgressive days,
  'Tis now my conscience starts to probe,
Seeing the error of my ways,
  Because I touched an Angel's robe.

Leslie Greene.

Eternity

O DARKNESS! My imperishable companion,
My constant lover, clasp me!
Our union shall be complete one unending night.
O my vigilant mate, love me!

Desolate is my heart! Desolate and alone.
Come to me and soothe my unbearable pain.
O fearful silence of darkness,
O echoing silence of night!

See, how humbly I come to you,
How fearless of your barren embrace,
Of your cold everlasting love,
Of your frigid clasp of Death.

Man has sought Eternity
In infinity, in space,
In the depths of a confined globe,
In happiness, in torment.

Come, O enveloping Darkness, entomb me.
Come while I still feel a heart beating within my breast.
O Night, eternal everlasting Night
Take me. Hold me. I wait.

Eugénie of Greece.

Poets and Pretenders

THE crux of any critical assessment of poetry is that it is not possible to make an exact definition of it, and in consequence it is difficult to determine what qualities, technical, aesthetic, and spiritual, should be found in it. Nevertheless, we recently listened to a lecture by an eminent Doctor who had placed his considerable talent for scientific research at the service of this problem. His analysis had indicated to him that the prime ingredients of good poetry were three, which he most aptly described as vitamins. These qualities were mystery, ecstasy and sublimity, and the distinguished lecturer expressed the view that verse could not be considered to have achieved a poetical standard unless one or more of these qualities was present in it.

On this assessment we might have to revise our views of the incoherent lucubrations of some of our contemporaries. If incoherence be mystery, then indeed are these practitioners of the esoteric, poets; but we think that incoherence is better described as obfuscation, and we are sure the lecturer will agree with us. The mystery which he has in mind is the mystery which shrouds all the spiritual significances of our dual nature—mysteries which are not deliberate but inescapable.

The ecstatic is another matter. Incoherence may sometimes reach a degree where it might be likened to any other lunatic ecstasy; while the sublimity which we must look for is certainly not the sublimity of impudence.

But let us examine a few of the new publications which have reached us, with this analysis in mind. The first to hand to which we may apply our scientific test is *The Voyage and Other Poems*, by Edwin Muir (Faber, 6s.). At first sight the contents of this volume might seem somewhat cerebral, or even pedestrian, but as one reads on there gathers in the mind of the reader a certain excitation, not perhaps very marked, certainly not overwhelming, but nevertheless enough to be evidence of some true poetic quality. Mr. Muir writes English, and is content to present his thought to us in words and symbols that we can understand, and if the general effect is somewhat painstaking and the reward moderate we can nevertheless be grateful to him for his sincerity, his eloquence and his respect for his readers.

By the criterion of the three qualities which we have mentioned, there is perhaps not much confirmation of poetic merit in these quite worthwhile poems. The mystery and sublimity are hard to find, but there is occasionally a flavour of that ecstasy which is the property of all work which patiently and musically works up to a climax. It is probably inherent in all verse which has a cerebral origin but which, from that humble beginning, is still able to capture the poet's own emotions, that there will be a failure to reach the heights of sublimity and a certain absence of mystery.

Let us quote the last three stanzas of a poem called "The Castle". Space prevents us quoting the whole of it, but the first half is a description of the strength of the Castle and it is not perhaps essential to quote it in order that the last half should be properly understood. Suffice it to say that the whole is written with a pleasant ease and choice of diction:

> "What could they offer us for bait?
> Our captain was brave and we were true . . .
> There was a little private gate,
> A little wicked wicket gate.
> The wizened warder let them through.

Oh then our maze of tunnelled stone
Grew thin and treacherous as air.
The cause was lost without a groan,
The famous citadel overthrown,
And all its secret galleries bare.

How can this shameful tale be told?
I will maintain until my death
We could do nothing, being sold;
Our only enemy was gold,
And we had no arms to fight it with."

This is hardly an appropriate place to remark on *The Shadow Factory*, by Anne Ridler (Faber, 6s.), and we only do so because it is the third in Mr. Martin Browne's series of Plays by Poets. As we have often tried to point out, all verse is not poetry, and by the same token a play—even a play in verse—by a poet is not necessarily poetry either. In the verse of this play we look in vain for any of the qualities which we are seeking, and we found no more than a few lines here and there of what we could call poetry as measured by any standard; indeed, it is difficult to see why the play should have been written in verse at all.

The action takes place in an ultra-modern factory, and, briefly, outlines the process of humanisation performed on the Director (he could as well be called Komissar) by the combined effect of a Nativity Play and an artist's pictorial interpretation of the life of the factory. Let the Director explain in his own words his motive for staging the Nativity Play:

"I am not a religious man myself—
Not in any conventional sense—
But I am quite aware of its social value:
That undoubtedly still exists . . . .
My principal aim—and in some part
I think I may say, my innovation—
Has been to make this factory
The centre of life for all my workers.
Why, then, must they go to church
For these delightful ceremonies?
Why not bring them into the factory?"

His reason for commissioning the artist to paint murals for the canteen is on a similar level:

"Leading industrialists to-day
(Of whom I think I may claim to be one)
Aim to get the best from a worker. . . .
The factory must give them satisfying art;
The factory must see that they have a philosophy."

But the Director proves to have selected his craftsmen indiscreetly: that is to say, he has chosen an honest artist to paint his pictures and an honest parson to stage his play; and when the cynic lets loose the unpredictable forces of truth and belief he is liable to get more than he bargained for.

This work has occasional profundity of thought, and much that is of theatrical value and interest; the Director's office, with its screen showing the work of the factory in silhouette, should prove an effective stage setting; but our business is with poetry, not drama, and as poetry we can only say that the extracts we have

quoted are representative of the whole. We should, however, be doing Miss Ridler less than justice if we failed to point that there are moments—unfortunately rare—when she seems to achieve something higher:

"No need to search for the iron sky,
The marble-handed trees, the wind
With scalding spear. No need to search
In such a world at such a time
For cold, when cold is in every heart.
Yet ice can burn, the icy stars
Can flame, and so our hearts at coldest
May be found on fire with love.
Who will stand at the farthest pole
Of frost, and stand enflamed with love?
Who will take the agony
Of warmth into a frozen heart?
Who will encompass the birth of Christ?"

A Map of Verona, by Henry Reed (Cape, 3s. 6d.) would be difficult indeed to criticise upon the tri-une basis of mystery, ecstasy and sublimity. If it be judged upon its capacity to move the reader, or to inspire any one of these three states, it should delay us not at all; from which it will be gathered that we are presented by it with so little to praise or blame that we are amost debarred from comment. Take the first stanza from a poem called "Envoy":

"Whatever sort of garden
You, I, or we shall build,
Neglected much, or cared for,
And all its great designs
Fulfilled or unfulfilled:
Built over ruined shrines,
Where others have loved and worshipped,
Or built on virgin ground:
Shaped or disorderly,
Let it at least be
Different from this",

or look where you will, and there is the same incapacity to come to grips with anything real or vital such as could shatter the dull crust of the reader's wonted composure or banish for one beautiful moment the boredom of living.

Quite another matter, however, is *Talking Bronco*, by Roy Campbell (Faber, 7s. 6d.), for he makes a successful attack upon both mystery and esctasy, and perhaps only fails of sublimity by reason of a certain want of logical restraint in his handling of the wealth of imagery which is at his hand. To be a virtuoso with words or a master of striking phrases is like being mounted on too mettlesome a steed, whose pacings and curvettings absorb the rider's attention to forgetfulness of his destination. However, Mr. Campbell has certainly created a volume of attractive and even powerful poems and in so doing has succeeded in avoiding any of that objectionable self-consciousness which is so often the accompaniment of so much expertness with words. That he has succeeded in doing this is of course evidence of the sincerity and reality of his poetic gift, and if he is too well mounted at present for the highest achievement there is small reason for misgiving about the future.

We wish we could quote a great deal of this vigorous, manly book, and to give

the taste of it in the merest morsel is to encounter a problem practically unsolvable, but we will essay the task with three stanzas from a poem called "The Clock in Spain":

"Her eyelashes with jet-black sting
Like scorpions curved: and dark as night
The chevrons on her brows that spring
Like feathers in a condor's wing
Arching their splendour in the height:

The ivory, the jet, the coral,
The dainty groove that dints her back
To take the sting from every moral
And made each jealousy or quarrel
The fiercer aphrodisiac.

The lips that burn like crimson chillies:
The valleys where the thyme uncloses:
The haunches like a bounding filly's:
Her breasts like bruised and bouncing roses—
And all the rest a field of lilies!"

Whether the transatlantic world has heard of our scientific dissection and analysis of poetry is more than doubtful, if we take in evidence a new volume from Toronto, *Grey Ship Moving*, by Charles Bruce (British Authors' Press, 7s. 6d.). We take no shame in quoting the first stanza of the first poem:

"She was built for the stylish South American run,
To haul smooth silk, on every kind of body,
Through the degrees to Rio and B.A.
Laid down at Belfast in Nineteen Thirty-nine,
Six hundred and forty feet of naked ship,
Twenty-five thousand gross, seventeen underdeck,
And fourteen thousand net;
Designed for comfort; (Look her up in Lloyds.)"

It is not unusual to find the better poems of any book at its beginning but, whether this one be the best or not, it certainly sets the tone for a great many of the others, and nowhere were we brought into contact with any one of the mystical trinity for which we are searching.

With *Full Cycle*, by Anthony Richardson (Hodder & Stoughton, 3s. 6d.) we fared no better, in fact worse, for in this volume not only is there small hint of poetic quality but the versification is poor, the diction flatly violent and the thought superficial; and yet the author does not escape pretension, seeking for strength, as he does, with strong words:

"False Fantasy, I seize you by the throat
And drive my dagger of truth between your eyes!
I grin to hear your shrill contentious cries,
And as you swoon in agony I gloat!
An end to you, on whom the poets dote!"

This sort of thing is definitely not good enough and we may be encouraged therefore by Mr. Geoffrey Faber's view that the halcyon days of publishing, when anything and everything could expect to be sold out, are probably passing. The certainty of good sales for any kind of work is no spur to the critical selection of what should be published.

Metaphysical poetry, the description applied by its publisher to the contents of *Adam and Eve and Us*, by Hardiman Scott (Sylvan Press, 8s. 6d.), should certainly contain mystery and some esctasy, and indeed it does here. Moreover, these poems are as free from egotism and its pretensions as all truly subjective work must be, for the deeper we delve into our inner selves the farther we journey from that superficiality, the ego. The paradox needs little explanation, for the universal hides in all of us; only the individual fronts the world; and the poet's task in realising his own powers is to get as far away from his own personality as he can. Mr. Scott does this, either by instinct or by conviction; it is no matter which. In the result we listen to ourselves when we read his poetry; he speaks for us (if more beautifully) not to us, and therein is the mystery, and the resultant ecstasy, which we are convinced now are necessary to true poetry. Not to many is given the superlative sublime; that is the prerogative of the immortal, and mankind is to-day experiencing a spiritual recession. It is enough perhaps to say of the author that he nowhere seeks to mock, and mouths no nonsense, but is content to nurse his flame.

Mr. Scott draws richly from nature, both for inspiration and for illustration, eschewing mere description; but by bringing it into an ever closer relation to his own life and ours, he paints enchanting pictures nevertheless. Here is one, "Silver Birches":

> All summer I have watched your moonspun limbs
> And leaves like butterflies flirting
> And felt the sap, eager at your twig tips
> With green and white impatient probing flame,
> Fierce with your primal ambition, questing
> Space its futureless and blue dimension.
>
> Now is the attainment, and the last leaves
> Like charred paper clinging, desire burnt out;
> For the attainment and the death are one.
> Black-veined white your arms and bamboo polish
> Bent like an archer in the wind, screaming
> An arrow's next impetuous flight.
>
> In the field's hollow, already the mist
> Like pale blue pastel spreads, the rugose earth
> Darkening full with winter, and your twigs
> Are dying red yet bring no warmth to my flesh,
> For this is the sleep of love, and merges
> In your sapling—triumphant winter scream.

There are many kinds of mystery and an illimitable variety of ecstasies, indeed as many and as various as are the human beings who seek to elucidate the one and capture the other. For while it is true that neither quality is inherent in the personality, but is a property of the universal, it is equally true that by the personality it must be interpreted and rendered comprehensible to others. The individual ego is, or should be, no more than a prism whereby this inner light is broken up into words, refracted maybe but not distorted, taking from the process the character of the personality responsible but without reflecting any of that person's conscious egotisms. Thus in reading *Collected Lyrical Poems*, by Vivian Locke Ellis (Faber, 7s. 6d.) we encounter not so much another personality

as another interpretation, upon perhaps another plane, of the same eternal truths. Seen through another's eyes all things are different and sometimes immensely more significant. Beauty is assuredly in the seeing eye, as truth is upon the inspired tongue.

It is more than 30 years since Mr. Locke Ellis published any poems, an abstinence for which we cannot be grateful to him. For in this volume there is a wealth of that sort of poetry which this Society exists to foster, simple, sincere, musical, and profound with the limpidity of human emotion. The author avoids that other darker profundity of the cerebral, and is innocent indeed of the lugubrious esoteric incoherencies of those Bloomsburial rites for murdered language which would have made his long silence a boon. The mystery and loveliness of Nature are to him what they are to Mr. Scott or, for that matter, to any true poet, a source of emotional expression as direct and uncomplicated as Nature herself. He is content to reconcile them with his own living, as Man is meant to do, and even if he is denied the ultimate key to the universal riddle he does not turn aside from the caresses and smiles of what is, after all, both an indulgent and lovely teacher. His faith can be perceived clearly enough in this short poem, which we quote in full:

Eyes can no falsehood tell,
'Tis only lips forswear,
None in thy sight could dwell
And faith not there.

I would thine eyes were mine,
Then thou their truth should see;
And have that perfect sign
Of love from me.

But wanting thine eyes' flame,
Though my heart burn as true,
I must use words, the same
As false ones do;

I must for thy dear sake
Tune those old strings again,
That now had better break
Than speak in vain.

If this had been addressed to Nature, instead of to a lover, it would have spoken as aptly of the larger integrity of a harmonious soul.

From such an atmosphere it is a shock to plunge into that of *The Devil's Waltz*, by Sidney Goodsir Smith (Maclellan, 6s.). If we do not pass quite from the sublime, we arrive perilously near to the ridiculous with this new issue of the Poetry Scotland Series. Described as Scots poetry, whatever that may be beyond an attempt to out-Robbie Burns himself, it is said to continue the revival of this improbable hybrid, started by Hugh MacDiarmid. So thoroughly has this Caledonian Sidney Smith revived the native argot that close upon five small-printed pages of glossary are apparently necessary to assist the diligent reader in his search for possible meanings. Presumably there are folks who will need no such help; we can imagine none who do having patience enough to avail themselves of its assistance; for it is obvious that in such work as this the emphasis is

on the words as words, and that we shall soon be heartily fatigued in looking for the wood among so many strange and twisted trees. A little of this peasant lingo is amusing enough for an idle moment but a book full of it, published with such ponderous sobriety, is merely perverse.

It is an encouragement to encounter a book which evinces, by comparison with earlier volumes by the same person, an improvement not merely of technique but in that fundamental attitude towards poetry which can become so heretical and subversive. Geoffrey Grigson in *The Isles of Scilly* (Routledge, 5s.) is such an one and we hasten to congratulate both him and ourselves on this new collection wherein he has restrained a fancy, once too exuberant and undisciplined, to a controlled and consequently greater power. He still proliferates in striking phrases, couched in vibrant terms, but these are now logically related to one another and present us with his meaning with all proper lucidity. Indeed his impressive diction contrives to hold the disarming quality of simplicity so that we half believe that this is, by some happy chance, the author's natural way of speech. There is certainly a fine, almost a hard, economy of words in all he writes. The following is from the title poem:

> Here are the islands of dead hope:
> And where the bodies safely crouched,
> The megaliths, empty on the headlands lie,
> In the red, wind-shivering fern
> High on these islands of a grim good-bye.
>
> Here, on Samson, are the ruined hearths—
> Hopes flickered there like fire—scrubbed
> Of their soot by gale and rain and spray,
> And the wild black rabbits run
> Across the longings of a yesterday,

and shows, we think, both the charm and the limitations of his muse. There is a literary quality which, while it impresses, yet seems to have usurped too great a share of the enterprise. We like him much more in his simpler phases wherein, as it were, his virtuosity takes a back seat. This is shown excellently, and beautifully, in a trifle called "Keynsham":

> Over the cobalt cloud
> A shoulder of moon.
> And in the blue, one cloud above,
> A star glittered like love.
>
> The separate stones were still
> White in the wall. Still
> In the garden the clothes
> Showed how the wind flowed.
>
> Music played in the street
> Came crossing the stream.
> And the evening for once was odd,
> And clear like a dream.

All in all, there is something of mystery now in Mr. Grigson's work, mystery exhibited by lucidity in expression, where before it was hidden by an illogical

obscurantism, but as yet no ecstasy of heaped significancies, of Ossa piled upon Pelion to make a ladder to the sublime; but yet there is an earnest of these things, in due time, in the incomparably deeper note which he has now struck.

An Irish poet should be adept enough in mystery, and there is plenty and to spare in *Rime, Gentlemen, Please*, by Robert Farren (Sheed & Ward, 5s.). The Hibernian fancy is well in evidence:

> Poetry comes to my mind like the redwing
> hopping the hedge for haws:
> anything attracts her: water-colour morning—

And that mysterious appositeness of irrelevancies which the poet so casually demonstrates is freely exhibited, and seldom forced, throughout the book. But ecstasy is not to be engendered by the author's casual singing. That is for the deeper and more emotional levels of consciousness. Perhaps he comes nearest to it with the impromptu music of "Lament For A Heroine":

> I watched her heart's quick seasons changing
> Shadow and light in her eye,
> watched her in every sort of season
> put the heart's darkness by.
> With tenderness, with tenderness
> she put heart's darkness by.
>
> She put heart's darkness by, attracted
> eyes like a carried light;
> one who had heard her murmur said
> the moon spoke that night.
> Murmuringly, murmuringly
> the moon spoke that night.
>
> And darkness now has put her by,
> the heart's winter killed;
> we whisper for our comforting
> that God's flour is milled.
> She went in death's last winnowing
> and God's flour is milled.

A good part of this book is taken up by a poetic play entitled "Lost Light", about which we may remark, as usual, that while it may be a play it certainly is not poetic and there is no obvious reason, therefore, why it should have been written in verse. It appears to be a conversation piece with a minimum of action, but dramatic criticism is not our *forte* and we forbear.

* * *

Once again let me say how much I enjoy THE POETRY REVIEW, which is the most engrossing periodical I know. I have recently and rather reluctantly parted with my oldest copies and have sent them out to the Forces and I am sure they will appreciate them very much. In these days there is not much time for reading novels, but there is always time to read a little poetry and remember it sometimes. It is a great comfort, I think. The Poetry Society seems to be spreading and progressing by leaps and bounds, and I wish it, once again, all the success and wide popularity it so richly deserves: IRENE H. LEWIS, Fetcham.

Dynamics of American Poetry : CXII

The scope of Roy Helton's writing life includes novels, short stories, and articles as well as poetry. Seven titles are mentioned in *Come Back to Earth* (Harper Bros.), his last publication. He is at present on the staff of the Pennsylvania State Planning Board and has spoken in hundreds of the States, towns and cities on economic and social problems. In his spare time he paints, walks and swims in the Susquehanna.

It is suggested that the philosophy of this poet brings to mind Thomas Hardy in which the littleness of man is constantly revealed against the mighty background of the universe. Let us see. . . . The first startling stanza of the first poem is as follows:

I see a new America
  Not far along the track
Where earth rides steeplechase with death
  Across the zodiac.

I wish that Mr. Helton had painted this poem. This book is a volume of stanzas, and the eye falls on one and another:

When earth, the last receiver,
  Blows trumpet for recall
Let love be my deceiver,
  Let beauty cause my fall.

Let me be fooled forever,
  If folly be the cry—
Let me be fooled forever
  By sun and wind and sky.

Another expressed thought we find:

Though trade is queen and steel is king
And science draws a laden cart
The hope of nations has no spring
But rises in the single heart.
So hold this truth all truths above
And dearer than your life is dear,
Freedom is nothing without love
And love is medicine to fear.

From out these few quotations does not the man seem to emerge?

Louis Untermeyer, writing in *The New Era in American Poetry*, says of Helton: "He has, like Sandburg, more poetic feeling for the America we live in than eighty per cent. of our craftsmen whose patriotism is so easily minted and so quickly sold. Time and again Helton, in scratching the surface of every day, pierces the commonplace and reveals the flowing core of reality."

Sea Pieces, by Clare Murray Fooshee (Harbinger House, New York) is a first published collection and it is of interest that Ludwig Lewisohn speaks as follows: "I have read Mrs. Fooshee's poems with pleasure. *Low Tide* and *Nova Scotia* are fine; finest are the sonnets, especially, *I Thought My Victory Would Bring Me Peace*, which I would include in any selection of modern sonnets in English."

Mrs. Fooshee writes me: "I am a former Nova Scotian, who attended Dalhousie University in Halifax and was graduated there with the degree B.A. more years ago than I care to mention. I have lived in and around New York City ever since, where I married a corporation lawyer and became mother of two children, enterprising and likeable daughters."

There follows the sonnet, "I Thought My Victory Would Bring Me Peace":

I thought my victory would bring me peace.
My feelings and desires that rebelled
Were quelled at last, examined and expelled,
Bringing to long hostilities surcease.
There was no reason then why I should know
That battle fields made tidy of debris
And terms accepted are no guarantee
Of insurrection's final overthrow.
No sooner though were garrisons withdrawn,
The troops dispersed and gone their several ways
Than, setting town and countryside ablaze,
The old familiar clamor rose at dawn
And through the flames, tearing the air apart
Swooped all the fierce guerillas of the heart.

In 1930, at Mr. and Mr. Tyng's villa at Southampton, the Tyngs were planning to take a party round the world. At supper one Sunday night was my first meeting with Mr. Markoe, and sister Ethel called down the supper table, "Oh Lucien, Frank is going with us 'round the world!"

A most congenial travelling companion, a musician and a writer, he proved a great addition to our merry party. Until this year I was unaware that he had written so widely, and asked him for a little sketch of his days, which I enclose.

On returning to Southampton, Mr. Markoe built a most enchanting Chinese house, having gathered in his journeying wonderful ornaments and draperies. This house is a centre of delightful meetings. There is no music that Frank does not know.

Francis Hartman Markoe's *Autumn Audit*, *Sam*, and *Winter Waiting* (Shelmar Editions, Southampton, N.Y.) are unusually presented in white heavy cardboard, with a silhouette head of Francis Markoe on the cover, all printed in deep brown. A man of the world and a man of the arts, one enjoys sitting down with his "verses", as Mr. Markoe calls them.

A lover of the sea, the sea rolls through all these books, and, as a matter of fact, to his garden's edge!

The first and last verses of a four-stanza ballade in *Autumn Audit* follow, entitled "Sea Rebel":

Let me return unto the sea
For I am weary of the land!
Why should I prove the tyranny
Of laws I do not understand?
How could I know your shamans banned
That which was life itself to me?
Sick, hurt, and weary of the land
Let me return unto the sea!

Then fools, when you have set me free
And left me naked on the strand
That is the ocean's boundary,
I'll seek no more to know your land
But swear by God's eternity
To bide content upon His Sea!

We turn to *Sam*, which is a long story, and interesting—in free line. Mr. Markoe calls this "a novel in verse" and the reader is carried from 1887 to 1940 and war. In *Winter Waiting* I turn to "Dirge in January". I am very sure it concerns the great and irreparable loss of his lovely English wife.

Sirs, she is dead that was all loveliness.
(Wind winter garlands, hemlock, spruce and fir.)
Bring her to sleep under fresh fallen snow
And let us sing sad dirges over her.

Soon, as we sing our dirges over her
(Wind winter garlands, laurel leaves and pine.)
Her soul, passing along some meteored way,
Will, with the stars, begin to glow and shine.

Long, useless years, empty for ever more
(Wind winter garlands, myrtle, mistletoe.)
Of her who was for me all loveliness
And now lies dead under fresh fallen snow.

There used to be a saying, in my nursery days, which ran as follows: "The goblins will get you if you don't watch out!" And so it is with poetry. *Poetry* will get you if you don't watch out!

Francis Hartman Markoe has had a fascinating career: born New York City, June 11th, 1884, schools: Ketchum, Cutler, Choate, Pomfret; graduate Yale 1906, after taking Curtis Poetry prize two years in succession; went to Oxford in 1906 and while there wrote *Masque of Medieval Learning*, the only undergraduate to write for the Oxford Pageant; left Oxford 1909 but lived on in England; 1910 went to South Africa to arrange preliminaries of the Union of South Africa celebrations; in 1911 was second in command of the Festival of Empire and Pageant of London at the time of the coronation and wrote *Masque Imperial*; played before various royalties; married in 1912 Marie la York Powell, daughter of the Regius Professor of History, at Oxford; lived near Taunton, Somerset, and had village players there; in 1914-15 was in Serbia doing hospital work; received the St. Sava, the Serbian Red Cross decoration, the Kossovo medal and the Cross of Mercy; in 1916 returned to America to do the Yale Bicentennial Pageant and write the Second Interlude for it; wrote *Mankynd* and staged the *Vanitas Vanetiae*; in 1922 and 1934 staged the second and third Street Fairs in New York and the Magic City in the Grand Central Palace the next year; taught English and drama at Rosemary, Oaksmere and Masters between 1920-1925; secretary N.Y. Prison Council 1919-1920 and Italy America Society at same time; received Cross of Italy 1919; went round the world with Mrs. Bartlett and the Tyngs 1930, and to Australia and China in 1931; flew around South America in 1938 and spent 1939 and 1940 motoring through each state in the Union; Southampton tricentennial pageant 1940; member of the Mural Painters of America and was for less than a year a member of the old Philharmonic Directorate; resigned on reorganisation and merger with N.Y. Symphony.

One Hundred and One Sonnets (Christopher Publishing House, Boston) are dedicated by William Bacon Evans to Truth. In the minds of many of us is the wonder: Are there many truths or but one Truth?

Quoting an internationally known poet, I give the following:

Thy veiled perfection we would better know,
O Truth . . . And yet as if we could not stand

The face of so great beauty, some strong hand
Seems, still, to shroud thee as the ages go. . . .
For all man's claims we little more can show
Than when in dawn of thought he made demand
To learn how this vast universe is planned—
Now lost in mist of ages' dusty glow.

Truth can alone our destiny fulfil. . . .
Confucius, Buddha, Brahma, Jesus, taught
In diverse ways Truth's laws that are God's will
And day by day must faithfully be sought. . . .
The world received their teachings and does still—
And yet of final truth, perhaps, knows naught!

We will learn from "Beauty and Truth"—a sonnet of the author—how deep is the religious persuasion and love of righteousness:

This dizzy planet filis me with dismay!
Unreasoned waste and ruthlessness in war!
Undreamt of riches lavished in display
Of fancied aims not worth the fighting for!
Youth led submissive to destruction's door,
Or loosed on slippery avenues of hell!
Old, seasoned friendships reckoned of no more,
And truth held lighter than magician's spell!
Where in this catalogue of errors fell,
Might honour meet the beautiful, the true?
Though earth flaunt lurid pictures that repel,
Of paramount exception, I find two:—
Chaste beauty, that in straight concealment lies,
And awesome innocence in children's eyes.

It appears that we are dealing here with a Churchman, with all the established comfort that a Churchman finds.

To begin with I desire to compliment E. P. Dutton & Co. for permitting us to know, and at once, something of Brewster Ghiselin, author of *Against the Circle*. Assistant Professor of English at the University of Utah and poetry editor of the *Rocky Mountain Review*, he was born in 1903 in a suburb of St. Louis. Mr. Ghiselin makes a very sound remark, but it is not very new, in telling us that no doubt if he had been born somewhere else, and differently surrounded, he would have written differently, but at 17 he went to live in California. But natives of California, I think, would not recognize his description of that country! "A more naked country, where the bones of the earth are visible, a landscape burning with light or dissolved in mists." Mr. Ghiselin labelling the following lines, "We Are Not Idle" (Winter, 1938-1939):

We are not idle, we are not merely waiting:
We are busy learning the past, busy thinking,
Planning, hoping, reading the papers, talking.
We hear the hoice of Europe like a bell beating,
Like a too-swift heart, like something ticking,

gives us an estimate of ourselves and of our friends in Europe.

In the minds of some readers and writers a painter's picture or a poet's picture of the sea measures the man. This writer measures up very well in "Blue Ocean":

Here where stone and earth, body of land,
Break off into the lost blue of ocean,
It is easy to be lost, pour out the heart
In sweet release over the death-blue sea.
The earth ends, the open water glows,
A glaze of turquoise past the swaying calm.
Untwine the root; ravel the foreland dust
Into the air; dissolve the rock with foam,
Unform the granite; drown in dusk the sand.
Grip and fist of life, relax and lie
Like death, yielding your lusts and fears, Drown,
Body of Being, in that stainless azure.

My Talon in Your Heart (E. P. Dutton & Co., New York) is a first book with, I claim, a very disheartening name. Why Miss Nancy Bruff should place a talon in anyone's heart is more than one understands, as in the pages of her book she betrays herself a poet! In a jacket conversation she herself tells us she has been writing poems all her life. She describes herself as "ruthless" in her thought and in her form. "Rhyme is very scarce, almost non-existent." But when E. P. Dutton & Co. place their seal upon a poet's first book, we look into it with interest.

Nancy Bruff's intellectual alertness and her sensitive listing is present in all these verses. "Highway" will win you to her side at once:

It seemed new but it was old—
Old as the journeys of the wind.

This has never been felt before,
Never! the young man cried.
But the path of his emotion
Was marked through infinity
Worn smoothed and glazed
By the tears and the rapture
Of others to whom

It had seemed new but was old—
Old as the journeys of the wind.

And again "Distilled":

I could use quiet words
And turn serenely from
The wrathful moment and
All small and strident crises.

I would be composure
A self-taught thing,
Hushed, hovering
and tideless.

Can I build this canopy
Of conjured will
And grains of anger
And strands of leaping nerves?

Distilled
Distilled
Distilled
To silent power!

It is very good news that for the price of 25 cents the good and the great in literature may be had in *Pocket Book Edition, Inc.*, with Mr. Louis Untermeyer standing by as advisor. Mr. Untermeyer served two years as editor with the Armed Services Editions and has joined the editorial staff of Pocket Books, Inc.

The list of Pocket Books numbers at this writing 342, and the Pocket Book on my desk is of Story Poems—Favourite poems of Romance, Humour and Adventure. In the introduction Mr. Untermeyer records that "Throughout the

ages men have been moved by great songs and roused by dramatic poems. Narrative poetry has always enjoyed the widest range and greatest appeal. Poems which tell stories are popular, because they reach down into the heart of the folk. . . . The poems in this book span several centuries, many of them are among the glories of English literature. But the emphasis here is on the poem, not on the poet. . . . Great names are scattered through the collection, but they are matched by little known and anonymous singers."

The index at the finish of the book cheers me. I find Abou Ben Adhem—and why not, since it *belongs* in the first of the alphabet! Of course Lewis Carrol is here and Walter de la Mare—"High Tide at Gettsburg", "Good Old John Barleycorn", we find—and "John Gilpin"; Keats, Kipling, Southey, Tennyson, Thackeray, etc., etc., etc. Curiosity led me to the pages that Mr. Untermeyer had allowed himself. I had a good laugh and I hope you, reader, will also, from "Spratt *versus* Spratt":

Of all of the gruesome attempts at a twosome
  The worst of the lots were the Spratts;
Their life was a series of quibbles and queries,
  And quarrels and squabbles and spats.
They argued at breakfast, they argued at tea,
And they argued from midnight till quarter past three.

The paterfamilias was rather a silly ass
  With an appetite passing belief;
A garrulous glutton, he ate up the mutton,
  The chicken, the chops and the beef.
His dining-room manner was almost obscene:
He threw his wife fat while *he* gobbled the lean!

He railed at her reading, her brain and her breeding,
  Her goodness, her glands and her girth;
He mentioned with loathing the state of her clothing,
  And also the State of her birth.
But his malice exceeded all bounds of control,
When he scoffed at her Art and the state of her Soul.

To show her what home meant he gave her no moment
  Of leisure, not even at night.
He bellowed, "I'll teach ye to read Shaw and Nietzsche."
  And quoted from Harold Bell Wright.
"The place for a woman—" he'd start, very glib . . .
And so on for two or three hours *ad lib.*

So very malignant became his indignant
  Remarks about "culture" and "cranks",
That at last she revolted: she upped and she bolted
  And died in the radical ranks.
Her will left him silent in a pique up in Darien
When he found she had founded *The New Vegetarian.*

And *The Moral* in this (though a bit abstruse):
What's sauce for a more or less proper goose,

When it rouses the violent feminine danger,
Is apt to be source for the propaganda!

30 Days to a More Powerful Vocabulary, by Wilfred Funk and Norman Lewis (Wilfred Funk, Inc., N.Y.) is a book of some 250 pages that no poet should be without. Dr. Funk is the well-known author and lexicographer, for 16 years president of the famous dictionary-making firm of Funk & Wagnalls. His collaborator, Mr. Norman Lewis, is a well-known author and teacher of English. I often wish that poets would come to earth and speak the truth. Perhaps you do also? Stars do not "splinter into the sea" and this should not be permitted, even in verse, where so much is allowed—if you know what I mean.

War and the Poet, edited by Seldon Rodman, M/Sgt., A.U.S., and Richard Eberhart, Lt. Comdr., U.S.N.R. (Devin-Adair Co., New York) stimulates reflections. It would be good to believe that war in its best conception opens the minds and the doors of the world to the importance of new light on our changing scene. The Duke of Wellington has said of war, "There is only one thing sadder than a victory won—a victory lost". The great Frenchman Rochefoucauld has said, "There are heroes in evil as well as in good". From an American standpoint the American Revolution certainly brought to our world new conceptions of man's treatment of man. And when we think of the gallant surrender at Yorktown of Lord Cornwallis, who sent his sword to General Washington who, in turn, returned it, do we not pause to think on the terrible sequence of events that are following the present surrenders? That the provocation is great, we all admit, but how can we believe it possible that such means as the world is now taking for punishment, can bring about a paradise of peace?

Well, to the book. These two gallant purveyors of what the poets have said about war from 1800 B.C. to 1945 A.D. have given us a very important collection. Humorously, perhaps, in the introduction one of these editors tells us "Beyond an admiration of valour and a lament for the fallen there is not much revealed in these earliest poems of attitudes to war, but with the *Iliad* there is a change. . . . With the lyric poets of the Greek anthology a new note is sounded. The free cities are in danger and the citizenry is called upon to die, if need be, for his country." Is that what President Roosevelt did to America a short time ago? I wonder! The preface of this book is so delightful that I am inclined not to read the poems at all—and it is Mr. Rodman who writes the preface.

"Amon Re, the Lord of Thebes" opens the list. The art of the reviewer is to make you want to read the book. Is that what I am doing? We find here 112 poets, representing 21 nationalities. The book ends with notes on the poets and their poems.

About two months ago I wrote in the Review on "The Poetry of Archbishop Francis Spellman". On the Archbishop's return to America I sent him a welcoming letter in which I expressed the wish that he would sign for me a photograph. Cardinal Spellman did this and now on my desk I have his last slender volume, *Prayers and Poems* (Scribners), of which I am speaking to-day. "This distinguished New Englander, son of Massachusetts, who has walked forward in the light of his religious conviction," is a man who in Europe and in the Pacific journeyed as Military Vicar of the Armed Forces. It is notable that Cardinal Spellman has given the rights to this precious book to the New York Foundling Hospital, which cares for children without distinction of race, creed or colour. Cardinal

Spellman gives the reading world *The Road to Victory*. Of this the *Chicago Sun* states, "The book vibrates with a creative faith and confidence".

This precious book opens with *An American Creed.*

I believe in America:
For the blood in the veins of America, our heart's blood,
comes from the wounds of many peoples, chaliced in
humanity's name upon the altar of liberty. . . .
In this America I believe; for this America, I live;
for this America, I and millions of others stand ready
to die.

The poem in this slender volume which touches this writer more nearly is *The Risen Soldier.*

I am the risen soldier, I have come
From out a thousand towns, the city blocks
The factories, the fields of this fair land
Whose name I whisper with a strange delight
Beneath these alien skies. Many am I,
Yet truly one, the son of many streams
That poured their wealth into a common cup—
The wide and golden cup of Liberty,
Which elsewhere men had sought, yet found instead
But Circe's poisoned wine, toil without sleep.
I am a soldier lifted up by War's
Stern hands and this my Nation's need, above
The petty round of pleasure; freed from wealths,
Sure chains, from labor's yoke, the snare of self,
And flung, an eagle, into atmosphere
That folds about me with immensity
Made intimate, I breast a world of clouds;
A symbol of man's fondest hope, which now
Like winter wheat, must bide beneath the chill
Of slavery, and trodden down by foes,
Dying give life to myriad golden shafts,
Each in its own true right an image clear
Of life and peace, of man with head erect,
Unbowed and fearless, under friendly skies.

One cannot read this soul-stirring poem, of which every line lifts one, without wishing to read it *all*, but here I must be content with finishing this appreciation with the last six lines.

Shall I not whisper with my dying breath—
"Lord, it is sweet to die—as it were good
To live, to strive—for these United States
Which in Your Wisdom, you have willed should be
A beacon to the world, a living shrine
Of Liberty and Charity and Peace."

Here we have a poet of great thoughts, greatly expressed.

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

IN REPLY TO MISS MYERS

As stated in my letter, my sole purpose was to "discuss her very interesting article"; what references were made to Milton and Redwood Anderson were the result of her invitation to compare certain passages of both which she quoted. My words "the living presentment" of the woman, etc., cannot, I think, be properly interpreted by her epithet "photograph". The "life" in the presentment is to be found in the imagination of the reader moved by the contemplation of the poem. There is little excuse for reference to photographs, wax images or even to pictures, which she originally introduced. As Miss Myers says, "Miltonic criticism is vast". The quotations on Milton's excess of learning in the poem are well known. I will merely say that he probably had a purpose other than the filling of space, in introducing it. After all, the work has stood the test of time pretty well and its reputation does not diminish. When she speaks, as in her previous article, of the "pitiful splendour of the inanimate, of the heart, passionate and bright, of man-made things" and I refuse to assent, I do not think that is sufficient justification for implying to me lack of vision. Anyway, I hope to read Anderson's poetry for myself—as she suggests.

Thetford. RAYMUND BOURNE.

May one join issue with Elizabeth Myers in the controversy over Redwood Anderson and Milton? I suggest one must forget the contemporary idiom of Anderson's verse, which gives it so direct an appeal, and try to look at both pieces as though from 300 years hence, when each will seem equally antiquated. Does Anderson's image really justify itself? Neither of your correspondents seems to have tried to find out.

To start with, Anderson does not say "Eve's hair poured . . ." but "her hair's *luxury* poured . . ." i.e., the luxury poured, not the hair. No one less hypercritical than F. R. Lewis is likely to carp at that, however. We may reasonably assume that, if the hair poured, all its qualities and attributes did so too.

". . . In one bronze stream." Here we have two ideas, that of a static piece of metal, that of a moving stream. Only if the metal is assumed to be molten are they reconcileable; and then we wonder why Eve was not burned by the scalding stream.

But this again may be allowed if bronze is taken only as an adjective of colour and not of substance; nor will anyone quarrel with the delightful "over her shoulder's ledge". But "rippled over One clear breast" one cannot admit. If the hair were thick enough to suggest bronze the breast would certainly be invisible, and the, in any case, ambiguous adjective "clear" is out of place.

". . . and tumultuously fell bright-foamed upon the grass . . ." Here we have another word of motion, which, with earlier words of the same kind, disposes of the idea that "bronze" refers to anything but the colour of "stream" (none the less the idea of static, statuesque metal it introduces is disquieting to a careful reader). But then Anderson tells us that the stream fell "bright-foamed upon the grass". If the stream of hair were bronze, then the part of it which fell on the grass was presumably bronze too. One has never seen bronze foam, nor does hair falling on grass suggest foam in any way.

The reason for these incongruities is probably that Anderson did not visualise Eve clearly. Instead of describing a picture he had in his mind, he let himself be carried away by delight in words and in metaphor. The parallel passage of

Milton is, admittedly, stilted, pompous and afflicted with excessive pseudo-Virgilian inversion. But there is nothing incongruous about its imagery. Although *Paradise Lost* was written by a blind man, there is very little visual incongruity in it. In addition, words like "dishevelled" and "vine" and "tendrils" suggest at once the farouche nature and the vine-like dependency of Eve; Milton uses to a very great extent this power of words to suggest meanings quite other than that immediately required by syntax; in the quoted passage of Anderson this "depth" of meaning is not found at all. It is only characteristic of the greatest poetry. When Meleager speaks of Sappho's poems in the Anthology as βαιά 'αλλά ῥόδα, he sets us thinking, not only of the beauty, distinction, and uniqueness of the rose among other plants, but of the thorns from which its petals spring, and of the labour required to cultivate it.

These lines are not written to disparage Anderson's attractive poem (how few of us could come near its luminous and youthful beauty!) but because it seems to me that a controversy of this kind can only be settled by minute and painstaking analysis of the texts concerned. If anyone object (as someone will) that such analysis "ruins the poetry", one can only reply that *until* such analysis has been undertaken, the poetry will not yield us half its beauty, as the four lines of Milton evidently have not done to Miss Myers. But such analysis is of course a waste of time in poems whose only beauty is superficial, poems which have no buried treasure to reward one's digging. I hope it may prove a help to those interested in this important discussion.

Ludlow. JOHN SIBLY.

P.S.—There is this to be said for Anderson's image: it cleverly leads the eye down all Eve's body by employing the line of her hair.

THE SONNET

I feel that Herbert Palmer's intelligent remarks in POETRY REVIEW, No. 1, 1946, on the matter of the "mixed" sonnet should have a little amplification. Whereas most will agree that in the Petrarchan sonnet the two rhyming forms in the final sextet advocated by the late Lord Alfred Douglas (to be used in the still memorable Petrarchan Sonnet Competition of 1944) are the most beautiful and the most suited to convey the delicate subject matter demanded of the sonneteer in his highest work there is much use for a "mixed" sonnet. Perfection, however, should be aimed at so far as is possible. The employment of the Shakespearean model when faithfully carried out and printed properly, with its final couplet lines set a little to the right, is a pleasure to read and forms an effective medium for English courtliness or pastoral subjects; as witness the two delightful Thames-side sonnets by H. W. Harding in a recent number.

The question whether we should deviate from accepted forms and mix our rhyming arrangements is naturally a matter of opinion. From the standpoint of form the resultant lower quality of a "mixed" sonnet will be obvious. But these "mixed" sonnets cover the works of many writers of supreme eminence—Milton, Wordsworth, Keats, Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, Oscar Wilde and others: so our English tongue would have been the poorer if these had not been written. The service of a sonnet is somewhat different now from that of its original purpose, and the reason or "excuses" for a "mixed" sonnet are increasingly apparent. In pre-Milton days, both in Italy and England, the subject of a sonnet was frequently love, or at least a pensive and delicate reflection of man's inmost soul. Later it became a vehicle for almost any kind of emotion, such as denunciation;

hounding to war, or the appraisement of some particular hero. It is quite natural that in these ruder blasts and trumpet songs the fidelity to the first delicate model should sometimes be brushed aside or varied. But this is not the only reason. It had been discovered by those of subtle perception that the last two or three rhyming sounds required in the final sextet of a Petrarchan sonnet, if occasionally "left to themselves", will give astoundingly satisfactory results, pleasing alike to the ear and the mind. For these last six lines can be varied almost *ad infinitum*; and even 1, 2, 3; 3, 2, 1 will form an aural completion.

I am afraid with these remarks the late Lord Alfred Douglas would not agree. But to me it seems limiting not to allow a certain amount of freeplay provided we do not consider the results to be pure Petrarchan sonnets. To sum up:

(1) The Petrarchan, Shakespearean and Spenserian forms should be treated with great respect and striven after for the showing and preserving of something most lovely and perfect in design.

(2) A "mixed' sonnet or one that deviates a little from the two pure Petrarchan moulds should also have its place in the world of literature; for if its conception be clear, its artistry tuneful, its originality will surely be justified.

Clifford, Hereford. ARTHUR ROW, F.R.S.A., M.R.S.L.

THE LAY-READER AND COLONEL CULLEN-JONES

Perhaps as one of the delinquents in the eyes of Col. Cullen-Jones I may be permitted to take the field in defence of the prevailing use of the word "lay".

The difficulty with any living language is its varying use at different times and in other countries. As an example the word "goloshes" in England means a rubber covering to protect shoe leather from excessive rain. The same article in America is known as "rubbers", but rubbers in England, according to my laundry's nomenclature, signifies washing-up cloths. Is it possible to claim that a dictionary has the final authority beyond one year after publication?

My Websters are unfortunately on Exmoor, but I take the Colonel's written statement that it gives "ignorance" as an interpretation. The Oxford Concise uses "unlearned" with, in brackets (rare) 1535, while its most notable interpretation is, "A layman licensed to conduct religious services". My own recollections of lay-readers are that those chosen to read the lessons in church were the squire, doctor or county lawyer. Should we dare to call such men ignorant?

Let us penetrate Colonel Cullen-Jones' own province and compare the Colonel with his recruit. The Colonel is presumed to know his job, as to some extent he has "specialized", while his recruit is quite obviously "unspecialized" and unconversant with the high art of polishing. Yet in many cases to-day recruits come from Harvard and Oxford and many are owners of large estates. Should we call them ignorant men because they have previously failed to polish buttons? I think the Colonel should scan more "forms" dealing with life as it moves on and he may find that the present meaning of the word "lay" is no more than "unspecialized". Now this is a long word for a book title and it also lacks a refinement which "lay" possesses. "Lay" only assumes that the reader wants special information on a subject that interests him. The same lay-reader is probably highly gifted in some other branch in which his present informant would be equally a lay-man. Let us take the issue on to my ground. Would the interested reader of T. S. Eliot have time to travel to the Grand Canyon in Arizona before any reference to this glorious land could be made? Has he time

to spend days of reading in the British Museum, reading St. John of the Cross (to mention only one of many books read there) for a single reference. Would he write for authentic translations from the Upanishads, with all the work entailed to locate the proper channel of information? Does he want to travel to a country town to interview a collector of old cards? Does he contemplate spending years reading everything and anything that has the least probable bearing on the best interpretation of a single word that Eliot has used? Yes, he might! Then he is specialized on the work of this one poet.

I myself am almost grovellingly thankful to be a common, ignorant layman (as the Colonel has expressed the word) to Professor Boas for his experienced knowledge of Shakespeare and again to Laurence Binyon for his beautiful translations from Dante, and to all those who know far more about the work of T. S. Eliot than I do.

Surely we reach the final wish to interpret the word "specialized" and I suggest it means no more than "one who has taken infinite time and care to collect true information". The inference that someone with a modicum of information to give to others is necessarily superior or condescending is so far from concrete that it is superfluous discussion. I think I share the common experience of all in that the more I learn the more conscious I become of the magnitude of life and the terror of dragging it to the sordid depths of any destructive force, which is basicly the criticism of others. Christ, one of our youngest philosophers, continually preached, "Judge not that ye be not judged". Our knowledge is so immature that we are incapable of judging others and may only be permitted to offer possible interpretations which only time proves right or wrong.

(Lest I should be misunderstood, the reference to "polishing buttons" or inspection of the regiment, is only a friendly jibe. I know many most gifted and courageous men in the Services.)

Guildford. E. M. Stephenson.

CHAPTER AND VERSE

As a dogged pretender I would never dream of breaking a literary lance with Mr. Herbert Palmer, but in his "Greenwood Review" Mr. Palmer cantered down the lists crying defiance at Truth, and the very dogs must bark; I hope the Editor will allow me to disintegrate such an enervating view of the Millenium. Mr. Palmer looks history in the face and then dares to say "You've had it!" How am I to cross swords with a man who is armed only with the point of his sword? If Mr. Palmer will go back for the hilt and the middle of his weapon (Eph. 6, 17) he will find that many things must happen, which have not yet happened, before the Millenium can begin, namely, among others:

1. The Russian chapters of Ezekiel (38 and 39) must be fulfilled.
2. Egypt must be over-run (Dan. 11, 42-43).
3. A battle is to be fought at Armageddon (Haifa) (Rev. 16, 16).
4. There is to be a flood in the Holy Land (Dan. 9, 26) which will connect the Mediterranean with the Persian Gulf (Zech. 14, 4 and 8).
5. The Second Advent (Zech. 14, 3-4, Rev. 14, 1).

The source of Daniel's vision is Gabriel (Dan. 8, 16), but Mr. Palmer asks what makes John so certain of his forecast; the answer is that he had it from Jesus, probably through Gabriel again (Rev. 1, 1).

The fact that a rule of iron is required confirms that a strong residue of evil endures (in Gog and Magog) throughout the Millenial period, but as I read II Peter 3, verse 10, the world will then be *entirely* destroyed (not "almost") and the account seems to describe an explosion of atomic energy.

Rochester. GRESWOLDE DAVIS.

HOW ONE MAN ENTERED POETRY

I began to write poetry when I was about fifteen. After the Sunday meal, when the other children would run out into the sunlight to play, I would remain behind to listen to the conversation between my father and uncle. They talked of everything: of music, art, literature, history, travel, philosophy, politics, and often of poetry too. They would take turns reading aloud the best poetry of France, Italy, Germany, Spain, America and England. I never failed to enjoy these readings: anticipating with pleasure the advent of Sundays. I was prudent enough to keep silent during these sessions, fearing lest some intemperate remark on my part would bar me from so bountiful a feast. I would talk only when directly questioned. Thus came I to the gate of poetry. What is my ambition in regard to it? I only want people to read my work.

That we cannot escape our environment is axiomatic. We are the product of our times. Our thought and outlook are but reactions to the vicissitude of perennial existence. It should not be surprising if in writing I reflect the world I live in. If the few poems you have read seem to express a lugubrious mood, to be "depressing" as you imply, it is to be expected, for they mirror the sorrow and tragedy of my time. I write what I see and feel and think. I see much evil in the world; feel the gargantuan weight of hate men harbour towards their fellowmen; think the only thing that can save mankind from self-destruction is a change of heart.

Literature, like all other mediums of art, expresses the times. Accordingly, not everything I write smells of the "operating room". For in spite of the sombre clouds of misery about us, there still is the wholesome laughter of happy children (few as they are) like sunlight piercing through; there is the fresh breeze of sweet-scented love; the panorama of sky and sea; the spectacle of the seasons: and little things like the imprisoned life palpitating between the walls of a blade of grass.

He who writes must see everything and try to understand everything. That the poet can express so little of the things he sees and feels makes poetry an art. In my opinion the poet should not be satisfied in lolling humanity to sleep with a sweet lullaby. There must be verism in poetry. The whole canvas of human existence must be painted, boldly and honestly, without fear of offending the sensibilities of reactionaries who would censor the canvas. When we do that we cannot fail to observe that to many humans to-day the great tragedy of human existence is not death, but the sordid fact that they are condemned to live in our chaotic world. Wordsworth knew what he was talking about when he made a remark to the effect that the language of poetry must often, in liveliness and truth, fall short of that which is uttered by men in real life, under the actual pressure of those passions.

No man is wholly noble nor wholly beastly. He is a mixture of the two—a half angel and half devil eternally torn between desire and attainment, between good and evil, a complex organism compounded of unknown potentialities for

good and evil. Man is what I call the ambivalent monster divided by shadows. Ambivalent is the psychological term to denote one who has a subconscious feeling of hate for the one he loves. This the psychologists explain by saying that the ones we love have the power to make us unhappy by cutting us off from their love.

New York, March 22/46. MARCO J. PIATTELLI.

THE PRINCIPLES OF CRITICISM

It's a pity Mr. Astore should have taken my letter personally despite my remark to the contrary. It was no more intended as an attack on him than on all the other charming people who think like him. His remark merely provided the excuse for a short statement of an attitude to poetry. Were I not sure that I should be banging my head against a cotton-wool layer of prejudice, I should (your indulgence permitting) be encouraged by the brave work of Mr. Bebbington and Trooper Rogers to state my position fully in the hope that some attempt would be made to realize it.

The question of value has nothing to do with a "college" education (supplied in my case, incidentally, by a Government which is benevolent to ex-Servicemen). The post-renaissance view has been debated quite openly between *Troilus and Cressida* and *The Principles of Literary Criticism* and the books are in every public library, if you want to get your values from books. I go to them only to clarify my own thoughts on the matter. I know that for me some things appeal more than others and some experiences are more valuable than others, and, like Mr. Empson, I want to know why; *ergo*, the hated "dissection". If you say "Shelley was a *great poet*" I want to know why, because I don't think so—but I am ready to be convinced; even if you lump "Byron, Browning, Yeats, Burns . . . and the 'Desert Island' pieces of Mr. Humphrey's recent adjudication" with Shakespeare and Keats, I am still ready to be convinced.

At the risk of arousing Mr. Astore's further resentment, I will make another "dogmatic statement"; it is that there is no such thing as "writing from the head" and "writing from the heart" or "genuine poetry is conceived and composed in the soul" as Matthew Arnold put it, there is merely good writing and bad writing. (I know Mr. Astore did not suggest the comparison, but I feel it in the air.) The aesthetic from which one criticises has very little to do with a college education, and if you say *Othello* is great and *The Rubaiyat* is great the terms of that aesthetic need some explaining. It is symptomatic of a looseness of expression, the lowest point of which is reached by Hollywood advertising agents. There is a confusion of kinds of pleasure to be got from poetry and a too-great readiness to submit to the incantatory or purely sentimental element. A full explanation of this would need an article to itself, and when I read Mr. Astore's remarks (which completely miss the point) I am inclined to ask the Editor to allow me space in a future number. I did not, for example, suggest that "golden", "green" and "crystal" in the Read poem could be omitted and the result read like poetry; what I said was that "with the possible exception of 'crystal' they add nothing to the sense". To take a passage of Keats' mature work and compare it with Mr. Read's poem is surely to discern the difference in use of adjectives. Here is "greatness" if you like:

> Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,
> Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,
> Or on the wealth of globèd peonies;

(I did not quote the "modern" poem, "Here lies Michael of the small bone", because I think that modern poems are in some curious way superior to those which are known as "classics", by the way; I wish to dissociate myself completely from frivolous controversy of this kind. What I did was to pick a poem by someone of the same generation as Mr. Read and illustrate how simplicity could be achieved without a detectable contriving.)

I am not dissatisfied with simplicity; I value it as the highest evidence of poetic worth, which was why I quoted Blake. What I am dissatisfied with is a false air of simplicity. It is a little late in the day and perhaps presumptuous of me to endorse I. A. Richards' remarks on the necessity of a constant "awareness" if one is to get the most out of poetry, but I do recommend *Practical Criticism* to Mr. Astore. The business of "realizing instinctively" what are great poems is not so simple as it seems.

Emmanuel College, Cambridge. GEOFFREY MOORE.

[Mr. Geoffrey Moore is Editor of *The Bridge*, a new Cambridge magazine intended to bridge the gap between the universities and between traditional and modernist literary expression and criticism. We refrain from quoting from the verse and plays "exposed".]

AN INSPIRATION AND A VISION

I would like to extend your penetrative reviewer's references to *Poems by Jonathan Wilson* (Jonathan Cape, 3s. 6d.) by some further observations.

The present-day tendency (from which THE POETRY REVIEW is exempt) to exalt every verse writer to the rank of poet is easy enough to explain. There is in this country an emotional need for poetry which the desperate efforts of the modern school have not satisfied. The true poet is a natural phenomenon and speaks from the heart. Businessmen and scholars, left-wing intellectuals and politicians, adolescents and disappointed spinsters are often mistaken for poets by "progressive" critics, but poetry remains to-day what it has always been, a vocation and a sacrifice. The poet must be himself—he must not be swayed by circumstance and current opinion. He must write poetry, and not philosophical treatises—the school of psychological wisecracks is doomed to rapid extinction.

There are two main pitfalls which threaten the poet of to-day, and both are equally dangerous. First, the writing of startling technical exercises, and indulgence in intellectual irrelevancies; second, a reactionary return to the vapid waters of musical meaninglessness. Jonathan Wilson did not fall into either of these two traps. His poetry is always melodiously significant, but he did not stagnate, and was ever on the look out for new advances in technique. In himself he held the essence of greatness, and those who met him realised, perhaps for the first time, the meaning and promise of the true artist. This quality is reflected in his writing, and although these poems are by no means flawless, they have that flame in them which distinguishes poetry from ordinary verse.

In his preface to the book, Mr. G. M. Young throws interesting light on the poet's theory of rhythm when he quotes him as writing: "I hear it (rhythm) like the first beats of bars in music. In between the beats there can be any number of syllables as long as the beat is more or less regular". This will be particularly appreciated by those who have read Gerard Manley Hopkins' ideas on sprung rhythm. Unfortunately the preface is obviously the work of a competent prose critic who has known the poet personally, but who judges poetry as prose in

verse form, and this attitude gives a somewhat misleading view of the poems in question.

To return to the poems themselves, the influence of Hopkins, Yeats, Rilke and Eliot is easily discernible, as Mr. Young correctly observes. Jonathan Wilson delighted in words, in their overtones and colours, their stresses and cadences, and very occasionally he became so obsessed with their beauty that he lost sight of the original impulse behind the poem, although he never used words carelessly or at random. From Hopkins he inherited his love of counterpointed rhythm mentioned earlier on:

"Now Christ I am kissed with your Cross, am signed, sealed
Yours by the pain of your love."
(from the poem called "Spring");

from Yeats, his delight in the shortened line and the delicately stressed word:

". . . so I went my ways
Remembering to forget and all my days
Were nothing but remembrances."
(from "There shall be no night");

from Rilke, a particularly tender and objective spiritual vision:

"Always were we feeling with mute fingers
To find each other within the night of youth?"
(from "Waiting");

from Eliot, the terse, heavily weighted metaphor:

"My soul, my diamond of self
Is hard and perfect at the core . . . "
(from the poem of the same name),

but it can never be said that his poetry is imitative, because in the process of adoption these essences are recreated and become wholly new and personal.

The chief failing of these poems is lack of balance. There are many lovely lines and phrases, but the poems are uneven and tend, after building an emotional climax, to fall down too rapidly. This is a fault which would have been remedied as time went on, and it derives from an immature perception of the poem as an entity—something which lives in its own right apart from the ideas contained within it. On the other hand the most evenly sustained poems are usually not the best.

But in spite of these failings, there is an undercurrent of loveliness and spirituality in his work which lifts it high above the contemporary rut. As with all good artists who die young, the promise of his work is greater than the actual achievement. The visionary tenderness of such lines as those written "For Iona", carry with them a freshness and a depth which are timeless and undying:

"The world is so full of you: with the slow
Coming of stars, the wisdom of your eyes
Grows into the sky, their laughter belies
Night's dark descent on the cringing world now.

And we, having no world for foundation,
Holding but hopes a shell might crush into dust,
Build in our hearts the house our two loves must
Have, to join there their sure celebration;

Each, though we hardly believe it, a window
Out of the world for each other's daringmost

Dreams; and although war's forced separation
Keeps us apart, our outstretched love flies
To our house, builds us together in trust
For the start of our song, our darling to-morrow."

(Normandy, August, 1944.)

No sadder comment on war can ever have been written, and yet for those of us who have faith in the future of poetry and of mankind, these poems will be an inspiration and a vision beyond darkness.

Capt., Grenadier Guards, B.A.O.R. P. N. RAILING.

"PARADISE LOST" AS ROMANCE

I was pleased to know this paper excited the interest of Lt. Prosper Dowden, though I receive nothing from him but rebukes. But stay, he "cannot help agreeing" with me on *one* point; that is something, though I much regret that it seems he would not be with me even there if he could have helped it. Had he set forth his arguments before I had written my paper, the latter would appear to be a complete answer to them.

He quotes Hazlitt, that Milton made Satan "the *chief person* in the poem" yet "cannot support me (or any other critic)" that Satan is the hero of it. I am content "to be wrong with" them. Mr. Dowden "would like to refer me to Hazlitt", but *he* said, "Satan is the most *heroic* subject that ever was chosen for a poem". so his star witness's evidence is against him. He has over four pages of eulogy of Satan in "On Shakespeare and Milton", in which the great rebel is described as "the first of created beings"; "the angelic armies bright he lured after him with his countenance" (he was beautiful); "his fortitude was as great as his sufferings"; "his strength of mind was matchless as his strength of body"; and in many other ways he showed "the same decided superiority of character".

I think Lt. Dowden misrepresents Hazlitt, when he says he "points out that far worse danger would lie in making God look ridiculous by making Satan anything but a most powerful adversary". I assume he made that statement on the strength of the passage from which he quoted, which in full, is as follows—

> Some persons may think that he has carried his liberality too far, and injured the cause he professed to espouse, by making him the chief person in his poem. Considering the nature of his subject, he would be equally in danger of running into this fault from his faith in religion and *his love of rebellion;*

If the latter reason is correct, he made Satan the "chief person" because he admired rebels, but if he did it from "faith in religion" that is still a slender thread on which to hang the assertion that he exalted Satan because he was anxious not to make God appear ridiculous. Adam, "upon whom the wrath of both sides fell", did not thereby become a hero, but a victim.

I cannot agree "there is no worse sin than envy". Envy may have the good result of leading a man to work hard, in order to obtain a similar thing to that of which he envies his neighbour the possession. Mr. Dowden says jealousy proceeds from envy, but "jealousy fears to lose what it has; envy is pained at seeing what another has".

I regret Mr. Dowden should lower the tone of the discussion by saying Milton's heaven is a place where "there is unlimited free food, free beer and seven days off per week". Were he alive, he might well exclaim, "Save me from my friend!" He says he would like to be there, presumably for ever, and affects scorn for "the

intelligentsia" who "may say it is a vacuum", but as he offers inducements that would appeal only to brainless workshys, I should agree with them that he *has* described a vacuum.

Hove, May 8th. HOWARD PARSONS.

BYRON—FOR OR AGAINST?

". . . The esteem in which he (Byron) is held by foreigners is not only due to the fact that he was so un-English, so destructive of English images—Shelley might have been their first choice if this was all they looked for in English poets: for Byron expressed in his poetry more than iconoclasm: he expressed freedom from convention, a refusal to play the imitative role, a candour and an intellectual scepticism which are out of order in English society but are the very stuff of educated continental, and particularly French, society." I quote from the article "Byron Now" which appeared in your last issue under the name of W. G. Bebbington. From this, then, we are intended to believe that Shelley possessed none of these attributes, that none of these daring claims could be applied to our "English image"—that same "English image" who, curiously enough, suffered permanent expulsion from the hearts of his English contemporaries, the patriot who was virtually driven from his native land, the father whose children were taken from him for ever in the heartless course of English law, and the poet whose own heart was broken by his fellow "English images"; this, then, was the *conventional* Shelley, the *imitator*, the *iconoclast*, the *representative of English society*. And yet, still more curiously, this too was the "English image" who, while the noble Byron philandered along the lazy road of wealth and the pungent road of selfish greed—the Byron who was, mark you, consistent "in sincerity, in candour, in downrightness, in courage" and in a fierce hatred of "moral pretence" and "social convention"—was left to bear the insults, the gossip and the social ruin which fell upon his name when certain ignominious misdoings of Byron were wrongfully attributed to him. What, may we ask, did the Byron of so many virtues—the *sincere*, the *candid*, the *downright*, the *courageous*, and, above all, the man with such a *fierce hatred of moral pretence and social convention;* what did he do to right this glaring wrong? Nothing, absolutely nothing. There you see Byron as he was: unfaithful, selfish and unsurpassingly vain. This Byron who espoused "freedom from convention" was the man who proved to be not only the personification of cowardice but who possessed, according to every report, a character which should have gone friendless unto the grave. And meanwhile, what of our "English image", what action did he take? He remained the most faithful friend ever possessed of any man. It would seem, after all, that it is good to be an "English image" despite the *iconoclasm*, the *convention* and the *imitation* which must, of necessity, attend that state. The "English image" is not, after all, to be despised by any man be he English or French, American or Chinese.

Although it is painfully obvious that Mr. Bebbington in his "Byronade" seeks to destroy many images and erect a false one, yet in the end he speaks the utter, honest truth: Byron, he says, was so "un-English, so destructive of English images". We are told that Byron's qualities were "out of order in English society" and, in the same breath, that they are "the very stuff of educated continental, and particularly French, society". This may be true, but whether French society as such is superior to our own national society, and indeed, whether such a comparison could not from Byron's point of view be taken to be derogatory, is a question which invites more than one conclusion.

The fact remains, this "English image", virtually exiled and suffering intensely in body and in spirit, this was the Shelley who remained true to his ideal. His duty was to show *us*, his *own* countrymen, the way to a world of perfection which only he could see, and to teach us what we should reject and what we should include in the erection of his ideal—a perfect moral and spiritual unison within the universe. It was his world, the vision of which resided not only in the land of his dreams but in the whole revelation of his genius; whether or not it was at that time acceptable to the vast majority was another matter. But Byron, so Mr. Bebbington says, was "a man who knew no answers to his questions and yet did not pretend that he knew any, who took reality for reality and did not confuse speculation with truth". Nevertheless, it is the ultimate duty of *every* man to work out his own salvation, and if he sees clearly the road which leads to eternity as he imagines it, he is bound, it is his sacred duty, to bring that personal vision before the eyes of his fellow creatures. They must all have the opportunity to accept or discard as they think fit, for it is only by a process of trial and error that we may come upon the clue to the crossword puzzle of life. And it is here, above all other issues in the human chain, that the poet comes into his heritage. Wordsworth gave us one verdict on eternity, Shelley another, yet Byron "did not pretend that he knew any", "did not confuse speculation with truth". So much for Byron and for the question put forward: Why is he so neglected to-day? It is because to-day, as never before, man is searching after a great truth; it is because he realises that only by such a discovery can he avoid the imminent doom which threatens him—a doom far more interwoven with our everyday lives and therefore the more frightening than the potentialities which were apparent in the days of the "Romantics". Thus, if Byron made no "speculations"—and what other definition may a prediction whose fate lies in the womb of the future demand?—he can reap no reward. If he, one of the farmers of life, failed to plough his land and sow his seed then he can gather neither fruit nor tares. The poet who "pretends" has laid in store for himself and his work a mockery and degradation which no man may envy; poetical pretence is pretence in its most vile and punishable form. But those two words "pretence" and "speculation" can never taunt the works of the so-called "Romantics" for, though a century has proved that many of their prophecies would appear to be barren, the day of judgment waits with the last sun to rise above the face of the earth.

In this connection one point remains: they did not shirk that which they rightly thought to be the means by which they would ultimately justify their existence despite the taunts of one of their fellows who lived for his day and, so it would seem, for his day alone. They did not hesitate to blazon a trail which they knew must remain unintelligible to the many sons of idolatory and vanity of their own time and of times to come. So, hounded sometimes by poverty but above all by the biased and stunted judgment of contemporary critics, they gave their version of an eternal story which sprang from the roots of truth and sincerity. Time has proved the sincerity of their motives and time will prove the truth of their words; no man, be he endowed with the genius of a Shakespeare or the tongue of a seducer, can turn that judgment round. That same poetic "claptrap", as Byron disdainfully labels the extraordinary outpourings of Wordsworth's genius—that same "claptrap" is, make no mistake, equal in all respects to any "Byronic" accomplishment. A few of Wordsworth's minor poems are indeed weak shadows of his mighty strength, but his serious works set an example which no man may spurn and few may equal. The true poet is ever searching

into the minds and manners of future generations for it is he who hastens that enlightenment which dawns with their coming. Without him "progress"—in its true sense—would lose one of its strongest supporters, though it is he, sadly enough, who must endure the mocking taunts of "claptrap" and the like which issue from the lips of men inferior not only in vision but in the common decencies which one craftsmen should show to his fellow.

If Byron's poetry has been neglected for that of Keats or of Shelley the fault must rest mainly with Byron. Time has hung her curtain of truth over all three and, after more than a century, there is little left which might give birth to unfair prejudice. Such prejudice as there was has been swept away by the unsparing terrors of war: beaten down on all sides by its calamitous inflictions no man bothers further to pretend, but takes that which will most ease his torment with open lips and a thankful heart. The Englishman has shown by his choice that he is for ever searching after the great To-morrow, though at the same time enjoying and enduring the pleasures and the trials of the present. Even so, though Byron's works may not have delved into the greater complexities of the future, if by the magnificence and eternal freshness of its nature it can stand the fluctuating tests of passing and, perhaps, progressing generation, there is no reason why it should die. If it does it will be by its own hand, for the impersonal outlook which breeds in the seedbeds of time has never known that lust for murder which might have brought about its more youthful end.

For Byron's emotional and sexual transgressions there is, there must be leniency. Byron was not alone in these, for though others endowed with a nobler mind and a keener conscience may have emerged from the battle with a reputation less scarred in the process it is an indisputable fact that, where the mind is capable of such floods of inspiration and such intense excitement as every true poet experiences, the body must needs feel a parent pull. The emotional instability of the poet matters ultimately little in the light of the message he brings. With Byron the Poet I do not seek to quarrel; it is Byron the Man—his snobbery, his vanity, and above all his cowardice, that I abhor. Had he but felt the urgent necessity which comes of hunger and of poverty he might have been a different being. Had he but known the obscure heritage of a Burns and yet continued to play his shallow and trumpery game of life as it actually was played, the whole world would have turned away in revulsion. But he was *Lord* Byron: that one word "Lord" spelt his doom.

Mr. Bebbington says, "It is the most personal poetry in our literature, for he is seldom absent from it, and he was perhaps the most interesting personality, both psychologically and intellectually, who ever wrote poetry, that poetry is perhaps the most interesting for all those at least who find man the most interesting of studies": a somewhat sweeping and most misleading statement. If Byron's poetry is so "personal" then, after all we have been told about him, we should hardly be tempted to read further than the cover, for poetry—the highest form of expression—becomes in the hands of degradation and ficklety the lowest. The best is worthy only of the best. To say that Lord Byron is seldom absent from his poetry is no doubt true, as is the fact that so many of his characters are, in reality, who else but—Lord Byron? Nevertheless, the exalted personality of the poet which triumphs over that of the man is the Byron we are shown in most of his works. Mr. Bebbington does not make this clear. And therefore, if we are to take this word "personal" at its highest value we are forced to admit that this is also true in the case of every poet gifted with the most meagre semblance of

individuality. The spirit of the man breathes in that which he writes and it is that spirit and that alone which gives it life and the tremendous power which it exerts over all thinking men.

Burns is an omnipotent example of the poet who writes of himself, but although his emotions so often ruled his life, becoming an obsession which brought sadness and suffering upon himself and his family, his character was of an altogether finer quality. The poems which were born of these moments, accentuated by the coarseness of a mind and body prisoner for the time being of alcohol and all her works, those were his most inferior invocations. The poems which incorporate passion combined with pure spiritual intensity, thus gaining a perfect balance in the narration of a walk of life which he knew so well, those are his best. Likewise with Byron; the poetry in which he descends from a higher and more subtle endowment to the actual narration of his life and the temporary fulfilment of his eternal egotism, that is Byron at his worst. Byron at his best resides nearer to his fellows than we shall ever know while breath still glows within the living shell.

Birmingham, 8. MARY V. KERNICK.

"OF THE MODERNS WITHOUT CONTEMPT"

I feel that Mr. Bebbington, in his article in your issue No. 1 of 1946, has not presented his case quite fairly. As an advocate of modern poetry, he has selected two examples which, whilst they are modern, are not characteristic of modern poetry. All except the ultra conservative would agree that poetry cannot stand still and the innovations contained in the two poems selected by Mr. Bebbington are of the kind that most reasonable people would applaud as being in the best interests of poetry. The poems are vivid, have emotional appeal and are not obscure. Has not Mr. Bebbington, by an unfair selection, avoided coming to grips with the problem?

I feel that he should have selected his examples by a more haphazard method of choice and in pursuance of this I took down from my shelves a book of W. H. Auden's poems, opened it entirely at random, and read the following:

Sitting all day
By the open window
Say what they say
Know what to know
Who brought and taught
Unusual images
And new tunes to old cottages,
With so much done
Without a thought
Of the anonymous lampoon
The cellar counterplot,
Though in the night
Pursued by caters
They clutch at gaiters
That straddle and deny
Escape that way,
Though in the night
Is waking fright.

This is, I suggest, typical of the sort of poetry that most people have in mind

when they criticise modern poetry. It is certainly obscure and its emotional appeal is negligible. I wish that Mr. Bebbington would address himself to a defence of this type of poem. It would be possible to guess at many interpretations of the lines, but is it really worth the effort?

It is not the use of "unpoetical" words in new senses that I object to in modern poetry. This I regard as a virtue. Nor is it the use of free verse. The obscurity and, still more, the failure to convey intense emotion are to my mind the faults of the moderns. Gerard Manley Hopkins' poetry has most of the characteristics of modern verse but the emotion comes over at white heat and one feels that it is great poetry.

New Malden, April 27. WILLIAM WOLFF.

Belonging to that public castigated severely by Mr. W. G. Bebbington for pronouncing much of the modern poetry as being obscure and meaningless, I have read and re-read his article "Of the Moderns Without Contempt" with the greatest of interest. It is true that many of us have not given the concentration and re-reading which the new poetry deserves if we are to understand its message.

His comparison between Rupert Brooke's and Robert Nicholl's poems of the 1914-1918 war with those of David Gasgoyne and Roy Fuller are immensely interesting, although I think he is unfair to Rupert Brooke, who did not necessarily think he was "the elect of God" because he was an Englishman, but loving England as the land of his birth stated quite truly that where he was buried could be for ever a little bit of England.

Were Mr. Bebbington at hand to analyse and clarify other modern poems as he has done in his explanation of "A Wartime Dawn" I believe I should begin to understand them. It is when he starts to upbraid the public for "glib generalisations" and then goes on to make the most amazing generalisations himself that my blood begins to boil and I feel compelled to take up my pen. What authority has he for the following statements: "This war is no old-time crusade—nobleness does not walk in our ways again. . . . No modern poet calls upon his public to bow down and pray for him and his friends, for such prayer has small part in our modern war. . . . What has happened to men that prayer has become meaningless?" Because some modern poets have lost their way and are "as children crying in the dark", does he assume that the faith which has lighted men's feet ever since they were capable of receiving it, has been forever quenched?

Recently a modern poem, a prayer, came into my possession—it is doggerel I suppose, but it was written by a modern soldier and it has the qualities of humility, faith and courage; qualities that men called David and Paul and John wrote about many hundreds of years ago, that men will still write about for hundreds of years to come. Perhaps Mr. Bebbington would laugh at those pathetic and alas! prophetic last lines; one can imagine the young author of them tearing his hair in the effort of finding a word to rhyme with "God"—but he will not give up that final line, for that is what he wants to say, with all the strength of his clean young heart. I found this poem in my son's wallet, when it came back to me with his effects. He died of mortal head wounds during the battle of the Falaise gap.

Because I think Mr. Bebbington must be very young and very sure of himself I am going to give him a piece of advice. Leave your desk with all its clever papers: go out to one of those lovely English woods in a gentle dawn (or have even the dawns stopped being gentle in England now?), go down on your knees and

thank God for the hundreds of young men, like my son, who did not wait to be conscripted but left safe jobs, knowing full well the utter horror of modern war, because they could not bear to think of enslaved people and concentration camps. Thank God for a king simple enough and good enough to believe in a personal God and to commit his people to Him. In this dark and troubled world it is well to remember that "The Heavens still declare the glory of God, the firmament still showeth His handiwork".

Duncan, B.C., April 9. VIOLET A. HOBSON.

SPIRITUAL DEHYDRATION

The dream of every poetry editor is to publish imperishable poetry, and to this end he must sift and sift entry after entry in search of the pearl of great price. Imperishable poetry is rare in any age and the rarest of phenomena in an age dedicated to speed and economic prosperity. Poetry is an individual accomplishment. It is the expression of the human soul which has expanded far beyond the precincts of self and has embraced its fellow men and, indeed, the entire world in its calculations. When the self has thus expanded it can once more shrink to its normal dimension and summarize its experience in a process of what one might call spiritual dehydration. The greatest poems are comparatively short, and yet large as the universe in their implication.

Just what occasions the creation of great poetry and why has so little of it, thus far, come out of the war which has given us experience so rich, so varied and so profound? Is it that we have lost the savour of life? Have we failed to fathom the import of the times or do we lack the skill to coin words of compelling poignancy?

A great poem grips the heart with the sheer beauty of its word-pictures. It makes the heart beat faster or skip a beat and leaves the pulse exhilarated. Its dynamic sweep never leaves the reader where he stood before. It acts like a tonic upon his system.

Luckily we possess much good poetry, but it is great poetry with which are are concerned here. If great poetry is scarce why is this so? Are we not living through apocalyptic days? Are there no awe-inspiring and cataclysmic events to goad even the most reluctant pen? Has not stark tragedy been on the warpath? Were there no heroic sacrifices to impress us? Never were times more bestial and more heroic. Good and evil, light and darkness, victory and defeat were never engaged at so close quarters.

More and more verse is coming off the presses, but the net results are disappointing. Allow me to suggest what may be the most potent cause of this "running dry" of the living wells in the greatest among the arts. In the first place a poet requires tools if he wishes to ply his art. Pen, penholder and paper cannot suffice. The poet's real tools are his knowledge of the history of the human race, and not merely his personal little corner of it. He must know the pageant of time, not merely the vociferous tail platoon known as the Twentieth Century. Life is primarily qualitative in character. The poet must know and love the classic writers of all ages and along with the present he must consider the past in all its grandeur, its struggles and its victories. The past is an integral part of the present. It is more than that. It is the very essence of the present. To-day is the sum of all yesterdays, and great poetry issues forth from the subconscious memory of all great struggles of by-gone days.

Obviously it is our schools and colleges which must furnish the back-drop for all great literature and they are failing us dismally. The liberal arts courses are everywhere giving way to vocational training. Radio commentators daily are

stringing facts on beads and offering the most facile of interpretations of significant events. More and more the uniform press and radio are compressing modern life into stereotyped moulds of thinking. Great poetry, however, as stated above, is an intimate and personal matter, even though its themes may be world-wide and universal. The poet sees life through the prism of his soul, and if that soul be Main Street then Main Street will be his theme no matter how often he may ring the changes on his subject matter. A lemon can yield only lemon juice.

In all great poetry the entire human race lives. Such poetry always exceeds individual experience, and appraises the moment in the light of eternity. In brief, it is because we live too much and too fleetingly in the moment that we so seldom transcend the narrow limits of the daily grind. We can build a greater conception of the dignity of man only when we include the entire history of the human race in our calculations.

Highlands, N. Carolina. POWELL SPRING.

WHAT IS POETRY, AND WHAT THE POETS' OBJECTIVE?

I have read with great interest Mr. Arthur Row's most instructive article on "The Purpose of Poetry", and, as one seeking for light, can only wish he had gone further. To a mere beginner it is all the more important to know what poetry really is psychologically if one is to appreciate its purpose. Epigrammatic definitions by clever men—words that dance, as distinct from the walking of prose, and all that—all these are very valuable up to a point, but to know what one is making for in verse it seems to my unsophisticated intellect that one should know *why* one writes; in other words one should try to get a perfectly clear-cut idea of the psychology that is prompting one all the time. It is all very well for the self-imagined genius to say that he writes because he cannot help it; that may be some excuse, but is no adequate explanation and merely begs the question.

Speaking as an amateur—and so all the more open to correction—poetry is an art: no one can correct me on that anyhow. I believe art in all its forms is primarily due to what those who have studied the subject call the "Play Instinct". In its most primitive manifestation this play instinct may be seen in a dog tearing round and round the lawn on the return of his people from holiday, or in children and other savages dancing or singing spontaneously from sheer joy of life. A step further and we come to the crude-scrawled drawings of primitive man in his cave, of children, of solemnly serious surealists, or of our own dadaists singing in the incoherence of chopped up prose: another step and we reach the organised tribal dance and chorus.

There is neither need nor space to trace the manifestations of this Play Instinct to its most developed forms at the present time, but, supposing its theory is correct, the only broad conclusion which can be formed, as far as I can see, is that the prime mover in all art is *vitality*, which presumably in human beings is energy, potential or kinetic. In verse making, apart from the actual writing on paper, this energy is expended in thinking, and thinking represents physical energy just as much as the engine that drives a dynamo to generate current for an electric motor; for has not science revealed electric current passing through certain cells of the brain when active?

All this may not be any startling new discovery, but are we not too apt to regard as prime factors other qualities which are merely subsidiary to, or are the products of vitality? Anyway, I fancy that not only does vitality constitute the most effective signpost for the poet in his excursions through verseland, but that it also provides the critic with the touchstone for his job.

Cheltenham. L. MEYRICK-JONES.

The Premium Editor's Report

MY favourite theory regarding poetry has received emphatic endorsement from the quality of the entries for this competition. That theory, one which I think is never overtly challenged, is that what is important in the making of poetry is the spiritual condition of the poet and not his mental. It is of course true that a state of spiritual exaltation will produce a corresponding mental condition, but the point about poetry is the place of its ultimate beginning and not where it was fabricated and licked into shape.

The influence which produced a spiritual exaltation in surprising numbers of our competitors this time was, of course, Spring. It is usual in this debunking age to be contemptuously witty about the effects of this season, but that it produced on this occasion, by a direct influence, a large number of excellent lyrics cannot be gainsaid, and I do not remember a batch of entries so free from the merely clever, the literary, and the cerebral, as this.

The result is seen in the much larger lists of Highly Commended and Commended names, but this is due not only to the improved quality, for which we must thank the season, but also to the enormous increase in the number of aspirants, which is no doubt due to the same cause. It is for both these reasons that I am now, at the end of my labours, even more apprehensive than usual that I may not have done strict justice to everybody. The task is in any case one of such subtlety and resultant difficulty that it is well to be humble in approaching it, and I certainly do not forget my human inadequacy when I make the adjudication. The selections are personal, but are assuredly uninfluenced by technical matters: that is, matters of form. What a poem must have, for me, in order to secure recognition is something of that vibration which indicates the presence of life and is an echo of the immortal essence which is in us all.

Shall I credit Spring also with the fact that there were so few of those irritating technical lapses, in comparison with my previous experience. The improvement was most marked, and it is of course a fact that when one is emotionally impelled to write a poem one falls quite naturally into effortless rhythm and instinctively avoids awkwardnesses of expression. The soul of man is musical, and it was this thrilling balance of point and counterpoint which I noticed with such pleasure in my reading of these entries—a balance which, in fact, sustains the whole universe, and is the foundation of all truth and therefore beauty.

The winner this time is MICHAL J. EASTCOTT, of Halesworth, Suffolk, whose poem "Reflections in Stone" is an achievement of, I estimate, some 240 lines which for consistent quality, all through, is rare indeed. Its length forbids my printing it in this report in the usual way, but it will appear in the next issue of the REVIEW. There is a sustained, if restrained, emotional quality about this poem which cannot fail to evoke the whole spirit of the ruined monastery, which is its theme. It is remarkable alike for its imaginative tenderness and its wholly suitable diction.

This poem had no near rival. Those in the Highly Commended list are all good poems, but here something has to be awarded to length, not as length merely but as length wherein the spiritual vibrations which give it life show no sign of fading before the last line completes the whole. Other things being equal, the sustained effort must take precedence of the short one, the *magnum opus* of the *tour de force*.

The Highly Commended list, like the Commended list which follows it, is

given in alphabetical order, as follows:—

Highly Commended

Wilfred H. Bartlett, Calverleigh
Peggy Barwell, London, W.C.2
Frederick Brundle, Sanderstead
T. E. Casson, Pennington
Alan Dane, Reigate
Phoebe Hesketh, Rivington
Juanita Peirse, London, W.11
Odette Tchernine, Guildford
Marguerite Tudor Williams, Deerhurst Walton

Commended

T. M. Auld, Twickenham
A. E. Austin, London, S.W.11
F. J. Bolton, Edinburgh, 12
Raymond Bourne, Lynford
Vivien Bulkley, Lyme Regis
E. B. Champkin, London, W.2
James Clifford, Hampton Molt
V. M. Flower, Salisbury
C. E. J. Fryer, Maidstone
K. E. Fuller, Leamington Spa
Eric Van Hagen, London, N.5
Phyllis Hastings, Hampton-in-Arden
Lawrence W. Hockey, Newport, Mon.
Gwenda Hollander, Solihull
J. E. Holmstrom, Haileybury Coll.
F. M. G. Howe, Hove
Greta James, Lincoln
J. Tudor Jones, London, N.W.11
Carla Lanyon Lanyon, Farnham
Thomas Morgan McGurk, Edinburgh
Editha Melbourne, Maidstone
James Crawford Milne, Arbroath
Brail Mills, Walton-on-Thames
Dr. A. C. Nash, Hollyburn, B.C.
Padraig O'Horan, Priddy
Cynthia Palmer, Huntington
Nancy Pollok, Tettenhall
Lucy Rochelle, Sheffield, 4
David Russell, Holmbury St. Mary
L. L. P. Seal, London, W.C.2
Ralph Shallis, Alresford
E. Sidney-Smith, London, W.11
Mary Sopper, Lyndhurst
Muriel Symmons, Salcombe
D. E. Christine Tomlin, Diss
N. V. Walker, Sturminster-Newton
Jean Whitman, Tahoe City, Cal.
Thos. Demarden Williams, London, N.6

LOVE LYRICS

The whole sequence of amorous lyricism was epitomised and illustrated in the poems received in the Love Lyric competition—all periods from the Song of Solomon to the convoluted introspection of these still ardent days as exemplified in the near-winner's "Epithalamium", in which the bride recalls "the brief balustradings of his second smile" and the bridegroom "with loaded hands the dark caress of love's lucidity lovingly describes". The successors of Herrick and Suckling, of Browning and Rossetti offered not imitations but parallels: the transports of ecstasy and the delights of dalliance were refreshingly and spiritedly described not as echoes but as personal experiences, and earthly passion had as many devotees as the love that left the earth and lost itself in the sky. The most successful poem, a blend of love's many facets and aspirations, of hope and despair, of transit "Per Ardua—ad Coelum", of frustration and yearning and appeasement, has had to be disqualified—with others—for exceeding the length limit. We hope to publish "Zero's" polished poem separately. We cannot place any other poem on the same pinnacle of individuality and achievement, and with so many varied examples of the love poem, with variety of approach and treatment, to choose from, we think it discreet to divide the prize between a representative selection of several types and phases of adoration, desire and devotion, from youth to age, from the general to the particular, constituting a

breviary of love, in which readers, according to age and experience, will find themselves sincerely expressed. We would have liked to publish other representative and delightful additions to these few typical treatments of an old-world subject that is ever burgeont, but must content ourselves with commending the following competitors:

D. L. Allsop, Westminster, London, S.W.1
Gwendolyn Archer, Manchester
H. Barrett, Southsea
Marguerite Huntington Bartlett, Cambridge, Mass.
I. Bunting, Stockton-on-Tees
F. T. Bratton, Wallingford
John Cook, Sutherland
H. N. Cowran, Angus
J. S. Cox, Auckland, N.Z.
C. N. Davies, East Morsea
W. M. Eddison, Littlehampton
Ken Etheridge, Ammanford
Joan A. Gaved, Par
B. R. Gibbs, Upminster
W. Griffiths, Wrexham
Phyllis Hastings, Hampton-in-Arden
Olive Hawks, London, N.W.8
G. Henschel, London, N.W.1
J. E. Holmstrom, Sheffield
E. M. Kelly, Maidstone
Jean Kenward, Belfast
James Kirkup, S. Shields
Sir Patrick Laird, Edinburgh
J. Matterson, Taunton
Betty Louise McCutchon, Birmingham
J. M. MacLennan, London, S.W.1
The Hon. E. Norton, Stoke Poges
G. S. Oddy, Isle of Wight
Olwyn Pogmore, Kingston-upon-Thames
M. Redgrove, London, S.W.4
R. Reinhardt, Sanderstead
Capt. H. P. Renshaw, R.A. Beckenham
M. Sheppard Fidler, Princes Risborough
G. Shiers, London, N.14
H. Sefton, Lytham
Claire Sorapure, London, W.11
M. Wardle, Manchester
Laurence H. Williams, Worcester Park
J. Winbolt, London, S.E.19
J. I. Winch, Osterley

Love : Sacred and Profane

I SAID, Our love must be a thing
Of aerial body, gossamer wing,
A Being of celestial fire,
A Spirit purged from gross desire
Untrammelled by the chains of Time,
Free of eternity, Sublime.

For we have lived in ages gone,
Before Rome was, or Marathon,
And underneath a fiercer sun
In the old East there were begun
Those chapters of our love's long tale
Which ends not, tho' the stars shall fail.

Alas, the son of Venus heard
And from Olympus like a bird
On silent pinions floating down,
Even to the spires of London Town,
Pierced my heart and fired my brain
With that old Pagan, timeless pain.

I, that have walked with God, am man
And all my Heaven within the span
Of two soft arms, and heavenly rest
Not to be found but on her breast;
And down my cheek the salt tears run,—
While Cupid laughs at Mary's Son.

Twickenham. *Thomas Rhymer.*

How Speak Your Praise?

HOW speak your praise? My stumbling words' endeavour
Can never scale the peak of my intent.
The richest vein of language must be ever
Poorer than your own beauty's testament.
Although I cast my silken net of rhyme
To catch the delicate magic of your wings,
Vainly I make each throw, you lightly climb
Beyond the reach of its frail tramellings.

Therefore will I be mute, who cannot snare
Your gracious spirit in my web of song,
Nor hope to soar to those blue realms of air
Where the bright angels of your thought belong.
When at your beauty, robbed of words, I gaze,
My eyes, and not my lips, must speak your praise.

London, N.W.3. *W. R. Latham.*

On a Love Betrayed

HIDING, until he struck to kill,
The treacherous claw,
He played, as preying feline will,
With velvet paw,

Using soft words to soothe my fear
With consummate art;
Then, with a tender 'bless you, dear!',
Tore out my heart.

London, N.W.2. *Babs Ross.*

Exhortation

SHALL April emerald the hill
And my belov'd lie white and still
While clouds foregather, sink and spill
Their gentle showers in lake and rill
And primroses a-brimming fill?
And must my loveling keep his bed
Ailing, while daisies white and red
Invite the bee, and matins said,
The lark is to the zenith sped,
And black-thorns blazon winter dead?
Up! Up! my dear! The violet
Newly enamelled glimmers wet.
The birch shakes out her banneret,
The fresia and the mignonette
Chide with the thrush, "Not risen yet?"

London, W.C.1. *Geraldine Kalta Cash.*

Declaration

THERE have been lovers holier than we,
Who sought God's benison with each embrace—
Their every kiss a pilgrimage of grace;
Yet none more faithful in their constancy.
There have been women it was doom to see
Whose charm defies the toll of time or space;
Their beauty finds no echo in my face,
Nor do I crave their immortality.
Although there has been hero more divine
Than he whose child now rests beneath my heart,
And age more gracious than the present, still
Could I by subtle exercise of will
I would not alter him a thousandth part,
Nor change another's history for mine.

Maidstone. *Prudence MacDonald.*

My Wife

(After twenty-three years of happiness)

SHE is compact of strength and gentleness,
And, lovelier far than beauty her dear face,
Those grave, sweet eyes, that deep unmeasured grace,
Which, through the years, has borne my waywardness,
Nor spared the largesse of her tenderness.
What though relentless Time his marks may trace,
From so serene a brow, naught may efface
The outward signs of inward selflessness.
Such is my Lady, of the true, brown eyes,
Forgiving follies of my heart and hands,
So gay in goodness, and so simply wise,
Who, knowing me—still loves, and understands.

Wellington, Shropshire. *W. H. B. Cutts.*

Love in Age

DRAW nearer, love, the fire is growing colder;
The light that was our life draws slowly in.
And we are old, yet this our love is older
Nor shall it end, that no man saw begin.
We met, the world was younger at our meeting;
We loved, and love has deepened day by day.
We parted, only to renew our greeting
Life after life upon the olden way,
But now the darkness falls, and day is ending
And we that ever lived as one must part.
Draw nearer, love, for though all pain has mending
Here's bitter comfort for the lonely heart.
O Love of all my life, all life were vain
Did I not know that we shall meet again!

Leicester. *C. Orton.*

THE HISTORY OF THE FIRST FOLIO OF "THE WORKES OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE"

TWO persons were employed in setting the type, one of whom read from a copy of Shakespeare's original MS; so the extremely numerous printers' errors may be ascribed to faulty MSS, mistakes by the compositors of reading, of hearing and of typesetting and, from their multitude, it is certain that the corrections to the proofs, made by Blount (see on) or by Heminge and Condell, "the Presenters" and "Publishers" of the book, were not carried out. They heartily expostulated with the printers when they saw the complete set-up, but without result, the latter refusing to do the wholesale revision necessary without the guarantee of a further sum for which the publishers could not agree to be responsible, having already pledged themselves for a considerable amount. Thus, the printers first neglected their duty, and then, being aware of the value of the copyright, took advantage of the position they had created and bought out the publishers at their own price. Their (the publishers') friend, Digges, wrote: "Shakespeare, *at length*, thy *pious* fellowes give the world thy workes." That is, after years of procrastination and manœuvring by the printers, and not till then, the "pious, fellowes" succeeded in placing the book before the public.

The publishers, as proprietors of the valuable acting-rights of the plays, might have prevented their publication, thus, besides the responsibility for the printing costs, they forewent the acting-rights value, in order to do "an office to the dead", and that the cost of complete revision of the proofs was beyond their pockets cannot be doubted, for Grant White has declared that the *minor* errors alone exceed twenty thousand in number. The publishers' great efforts in their undertaking was highly appreciated by the four poets who each wrote a poem commending the volume; these poems precede the plays in the Folio, and such testimony by their contemporaries is evidence in favour of this thesis.

Edward Blount, a writer of repute and intimate friend of Marlowe, has been "inferred to have been the active, although not very careful, editor of this edition". (Dic. Nat. Biog.). If so, Heminge and Condell, having placed the order for the printing and binding with the firm of which he was a partner, and relying upon his doing the proof-reading, as was his custom, went on with their professional activities as actors, maybe going on tour for the summer of 1623 (in order to earn money to help pay for the Folio) and returning in the autumn, for it appears to have been at about that time they found themselves faced with the situation above-mentioned, as on November 8th, of the year of publication, they sold their interest to Blount and his partner Jaggard. That the Folio was a great financial worry to Condell and Heminge is shown by their fervent appeal to the public, "Do but buy—but, whatever you do, Buy".

The dispute with the printers was serious for Condell and Heminge, and affected their healths, for neither of them acted after the year of publication. They managed to place on record, in their preface to the Folio, the ill-treatment they received from Blount and Jaggard. Such intimation had, of course, to be put in a form that would not arouse the printers' suspicion, or they would have refused to print it, but the following excerpt proves their intention. They say :

> "It had bene a thing, we confesse, worthie to have bene wished, that the Author himselfe had liv'd to have set forth, and *overseen* his owne writings; But since it hath bin ordain'd otherwise, we pray you *do not envie* his Friends the office of their *care and paine*, to have *collected* and *publish'd* them,"

which is a confession that they were unable to hold their own with the printers, but that had the latter dealt with Shakespeare, the result would have been different, for the poet was an excellent man of business and a doughty litigant, and would not have been bullied into relinquishing his right to have "overseen" the proofs, and to have had them corrected. The seemingly tautological duplication "care and pain", is a purposeful declaration that, from the task they joyfully undertook; one they expected their readers would look upon as an *enviable* one; they had received a double dose of trouble; *care* "to have collected" his works and *pain* (owing to Blount and Jaggard) "to have published them". "Pain" can only refer to the trouble with the printers, for there was no other outlet for care or pain in the publishing. Thus, Blount and Jaggard are proved responsible for all the worry the errors in the Folio have been ever since to students of Shakespeare. Blame has long been necessary for the woeful condition of the second most famous book in the world: it is now provided, and placed upon the right shoulders.

In his will, Shakespeare left both Condell and Heminge money "to buy them rings", thereby showing how much he esteemed them, and in their dedicatory address they say "they (out-living Shakespeare) have but done an office to the dead, to procure his Orphans (the plays) Guardians; without ambition either of selfe-profit, or fame: onely to keepe the memory of so worthy a Friend and Fellow alive, as was *our* Shakespeare" and "it hath bin *the height of our care*, to make the present worthy by *the perfection*, but there we must also crave our abilities to be considered. We cannot go beyond our owne powers". That was a perfectly modest statement of their intentions in undertaking their great and onerous task, and every word wears the badge of sincerity. To the *height of their care*, they aimed at producing a volume notable for its *perfection*, so it is unthinkable that they would have left the Folio in its present condition (notable for its *im*perfections) if they could possibly have helped it. In dealing with Blount and Jaggard, they could not "go beyond their own powers", financial and otherwise, and there was no other reason why the errors in the Folio, of which they, beyond other men, must have been fully cognisant, should not have been eliminated. Thus, at long last, have Condell and Heminge been entirely relieved of all responsibility for the inaccuracies of the Folio, and our debt to them shown to be, if possible, even greater than has hitherto been universally acknowledged, for, until now, the full extent of their anxieties over the Folio have been unknown.

HOWARD PARSONS.

One of the best-known of modern Scottish poets, William Jeffrey, died recently in Glasgow. Born in 1896 and brought up at Newmains, Lanarkshire, William Jeffrey served with the Royal Artillery during the First World War, and after graduating at Glasgow University entered journalism as a member of the staff of *The Evening Times*. Later he joined *The Glasgow Herald* as a leader writer, and became the paper's dramatic and film critic. By vocation he was a poet. He devoted himself to his art, and from 1923 onwards published a series of volumes, among them *The Wise Men Come to Town*, *The Lamb of Lomond*, *The Golden Stag*, and *Fantasia Written in an Industrial Town*—the last a long poem rooted in the years of trade depression in the West of Scotland. During years of illness he continued to write, and a new poem, *Fist and Hand*, was read at a gathering of the Scottish P.E.N. and the Glasgow Literary Club held to pay tribute to his achievements on January 17 this year. Part of the proceedings were later broadcast. A collection of his recent work, *Sea Glimmer*, is to be published soon. "Jeff" (as

his friends called him) was a man of unusual sincerity, uprightness, and kindliness, admired and beloved by his colleagues in journalism and literature, a tribute in the *Glasgow Bulletin* declares. The main body of his verse followed the great tradition of English poetry, and as a patriotic Scotsman he also wrote much in Scots.

The National Institute of Arts and Letters (New York) announces that Ralph Hodgson has been chosen to receive the Institute's Award for Distinguished Achievement, to be given this year to an eminent foreign poet living in the United States. Mr. Hodgson, an Englishman, now makes his home in Minerva, Ohio. The award, a prize of 1,000 dollars, given to a foreign artist, composer or writer living in the U.S.A., was created last year by the Institute and given at the time to the late Dr. Beer-Hofmann, Austrian refugee poet.

Ralph Hodgson, who was born in Yorkshire, lived in the U.S.A. for a time as a young man, returned to London to pursue a journalistic career in Fleet Street, eventually became editor of *Fry's Magazine*. He was appointed lecturer in poetry at Japan's Tohoku University in Sendai in 1924. At present living in Minerva, Ohio, where he raises dogs, Mr. Hodgson is a leading authority on bull terriers. Formal presentation of this Distinguished Achievement Award was made by William Rose Benet at the Annual Joint Ceremonial of the American Academy and the National Institute of Arts and Letters on May 17th.

L'Institut Belge has devoted a causerie in commemoration of Eric de Haulleville, son of Baron de Haulleville, Conservateur of Tervueren Museum, Brussels, writer and poet and author of *Le Voyage aux Iles Galapagos* (Prix Albert Premier, 1936), *Denouement*, *Le Genre Epique*, and *L'Anneau des Années*. He was secretary to Burgomaster Max and his successor, Burgomaster Van Meulenbroec, which last position he held at the time of the invasion of Belgium by the Germans in May, 1940. He was already ill and his condition was aggravated by the hardships and dangers of his enforced journey out of Belgium into France with his wife and little daughter. He died at St. Paul de Vence in March, 1941. Just before he died he heard that his last poems had been published in Belgium under the title of *L'Anneau des Années*. He is buried at the Cemetery of St. Paul de Vence, and it is hoped there later to raise a memorial to him and probably also one in Brussels or Tervueren. Eric de Haulleville, as well as being a writer and poet was also an able journalist. The review "Documents" with which he was connected up to the invasion of Belgium, spoke in a clear and truthful way on the many burning problems of Belgium and North-West Europe. He married Rose Nys, herself a skilled artist, whose sister Maria is the wife of Aldous Huxley. They had one daughter, Olivia. Their home in Brussels was the centre of a varied and interesting circle of friends of many nationalities. A commemorative meeting has already been held at the Beaux Arts, Brussels, in March of this year in memory of Eric de Haulleville. The lecturer, Etienne Vauthier, Conservateur of the Belgian Bibliotheque Royale, was a close friend of Eric de Haulleville and is well known in the literary world of Belgium and France. This is his first visit to England since the war. He was in Belgium all through the German occupation.